commonweal

The Editors
WHO LOSES
IN LEBANON?

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SEPTEMBER 10, 1982

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Birth of a Zionist

I have become a Zionist because never before have I felt Zionism so profoundly threatened—not by outsiders, not by enemies, nor hostile encampments beyond the borders of Israel (and there are surely these), but by the Jewish leadership of the State of Israel itself.

Arthur A. Cohen

Confessions of an inconsistent opportunist

Sometimes I can for sustained periods of time make like a Manichee and separate plagues, earthquakes, and heart defects from "true" Creation and ascribe them to darker sources. But not for long. The same ice-storm that is so beautiful is a killer.

Samuel Hux

ALASDAIR MacINTYRE ON HANNAH ARENDT
KEITH BURRIS ON JOHN CHEEVER
STEVEN [illegible]RRAND
ALSO: J[illegible]
JOHN D[illegible]ART,
JOHN L[illegible]EN

Will the real John Henry Newman stand up?

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Correspondence

A central problem

Austin, Texas

To the Editors: Many of us too young to have been aware of the ecumenical discussions of the last few decades find it difficult to locate our Catholic faith among the scholarly discussions by liturgical Protestants about myth, symbol, and meaning systems that finally seem to boil down to a disconcerting relegation of religious truth to the realm of anthropology. Karl Marx wrote that religion is opium—how easy it is to mistake that for truth: to wonder if Christ is real for me only in the sense that an addict's highs are real for her or him.

And so for me John Garvey's Easter essay was not "setting up straw men" but indeed addressed a central problem of my Catholic faith. From childhood I have retained the notion that the main difference between Catholics and Protestants is that we believe the Eucharist is really Christ's body, whereas Protestants believe it is only a symbol. If in fact the present Christian understanding of symbol can be as Father Nolan describes [Correspondence, June 18] this demands renovation of Catholics' perceptions of our own faith and of that of our Protestant brothers and sisters in Christ. I hope that this subject will be further explored in *Commonweal*.

CATHERINE B. HEIMSATH

The drag queen?

Bloomington, Ind.

To the Editors: Abigail McCarthy's plea for "integral woman" [Apr. 23] is lucid and reasonable, but probably not at all practical. Having taught in a seminary I can say that it is extremely difficult to maintain the kind of healing presence she imagines in an environment that is inherently sexist and hierarchical. Those who consider themselves "liberated" are often naive and think the whole "problem" can be solved with a porridge of yin, yang, Jung and androgyny. Those who have a stake in protecting God and "holy mother church" from real women are either actively hostile or exude a contemptuous charm, happy enough so long as you maintain your proper place. Whenever the bishop or the apostle delegate came to the seminary and there was a cocktail party, I was told, politely, that I did not need to drive "all the way back out here" for it. The seminary is an all-male club, and if theology is the "Queen of the Sciences" it is the drag queen. McCarthy's "education of the imagination" doesn't need "a qualified woman" in the seminary, it needs many women in seminaries as teachers, students and priests.

MARY JO WEAVER
Assoc. Prof. Rel. Studies
Indiana University

Yes, but . . .

New Alexandria, Va.

To the Editors: The Women's Movement is alive and well and dwells at the end of this statement, "I don't believe in the Movement, but . . ."

In the '60s Betty Friedan brought from the closet "the problem that had no name," and joined it to its sisters, women's fight for education and suffrage. There were giants on the earth then, emitting a larger-than-life aura not uncommon to pioneers in a new field.

As Dorothy Esther Connors's "Quo Vadis, Women's Movement" [Apr. 23] correctly asserts, the Movement seems likely to diminish, perhaps even backslide into oblivion unless feminist momentum is renewed under umbrella priorities. In addition Connors takes exception to the empty rhetoric of current feminist leaders like Eleanor Smeal who states that the mere presence of a crisis, in particular, our current economic crunch, is enough to insure the Movement's growth.

On the contrary, economic catastrophes provide additional threats to a Movement whose base has broadened to the Edith Bunkers of Middle America. Long-range goals like equal pay and proportional female representation in Congress and concern over nuclear holocaust are, as Connors suggests, issues likely to win acceptance from most women and are ideal candidates for mainstreaming growth. But there is also a paradoxical potential of support among the usually silent majority of everyday housewives who disavow the Movement and its activities, but. . . . It's the 'but' that is the fertile seed.

Even while she disavows the Movement and shuns active support, bottom-line economics demonstrates in particular to the middle-class female the necessity of strength through group-action. The economic crisis beguiles her perhaps more than her sisters to suspend risk-taking, to play it safe. These emotional cross-currents can swiftly trap what it should tap.

The Movement has made inroads at this level, 'but . . .' It has duly labeled and properly prescribed for the silent killer of the emotionally mature female, 'but . . .' It has gotten its foot in the door of most American institutions and traditions and continues to battle discrimination, 'but . . .'

A single 'but' does not a Movement make, but . . . but . . . but . . . is a Movement going somewhere.

CAROL L. DINCO

Mondragon-style, U.S.A.

Somerville, Mass.

To the Editors: John Cort's recent article on the Mondragon, Spain system of industrial cooperatives [June 18] should serve as encouraging news to progressive Americans seeking practical models of the kind of "truly" democratic society which they seek that reaches beyond the

(Continued on page 479)

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Contents

Volume CIX, Number 15

Correspondence 450

Editorials 451

John Cheever, R.I.P.: *Keith Burris* 453

A look at the record: *Steven Phillip Kramer* 454

The sea frozen inside us: *John Garvey* 455

Birth of a Zionist: *Arthur A. Cohen* 457

Confessions of an inconsistent opportunist: *Samuel Hux* 461

Recordings: *Derrick Henry* 466

Screen: *Colin L. Westerbeck, Jr.* 468

Canonizing the *real* Newman: *Edward E. Kelly* 469

Books

Hannah Arendt: *Alasdair MacIntyre* 471

Following Christ in a Consumer Society: *Michael Zeik* 472

What's Fair?: *John Langan* 474

The Great Code: *John Dominic Crossan* 475

Books of spiritual praxis: *Mary Gerhart* 476

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commonweal

WHO LOSES IN LEBANON?

THE SIEGE of Beirut has ended. Israel's, by its own doing, has begun—again. Lebanon, already torn asunder by warring factions, lies devastated. There are no heroes of this piece, so far as we can see, except Philip Habib, whose tireless labors as a tough and fair-minded mediator are sure to be needed again, forthwith. Assuring Lebanon's integrity free of occupying Israeli and Syrian armies and getting down to solving the Palestinian question—left hanging as much by U.S. inaction as by either Israeli or PLO belligerency—will be no mean feat.

For the moment, Israel has secured "peace for Galilee." For the moment, likewise, the PLO guerrilla organization stands in disarray, its military effectiveness staunched. And for the time being, Israel's client, Bashir Gemayel, sits uneasy in Lebanon's presidential chair. Gains if you will—but the losses, the bitterness sown in Arab hearts, the cost in international repute, the havoc wreaked on the Israeli economy itself, are hard at this point to measure. The war began on the flimsiest of pretexts—an attack on the Israeli ambassador to London, Shlomo Argov, carried out, as we now know, by the Abu Nidal group that despises Yasir Arafat.

It's hard not to draw the lesson: this was Mr. Menachem Begin's Revisonist Zionist way of dealing with the Palestinian problem at home, a way his defense minister, Ariel Sharon, had been itching to execute. In the long-term, we doubt whether either leader has gained much for the cause of Israel's security in the region. On the contrary, they have concentrated world attention on the Palestinian plight and all but wrecked the process of the Camp David accords.

We're assured that the invasion was conducted with a sense of restraint and proportion—proportion to an all-out Russian-sponsored PLO attack that the great caches of arms suggest might have been in the planning. Given the fact that PLO emissaries were scurrying about Europe seeking official recognition, we remain skeptical; Arafat is not dumb. As to restraint, doubtless there was—some. Till late in the siege the gallows joke among Lebanese as they continued about their lives in West Beirut was that they could rely on the superb skill of Israeli pilots at pin-point bombing of what an equally competent Israeli intelligence knew as PLO bastions. We can also well believe that Israeli commanders often put their troops at risk in seeking to preserve the lives of civilians. And for whatever reason, whether out of moral revulsion at the inveitably high civilian casualties and material destruction entailed, or a fear of domestic reaction to the lives of Israeli soldiers to be lost, we can be grateful General Raphael Eitan's forces did not sweep in to annihilate the PLO leadership in its bunkers and thus reduce the city to ashes.

Is it also too much to hope that Mr. Begin—or some of his cabinet—realized that the deaths of Yasir Arafat and other PLO staff would not eradicate the Palestinian problem so much as sow bitter martyrs' blood to be reaped even more virulently by succeeding generations of Israeli children? It is said that in those last days of the

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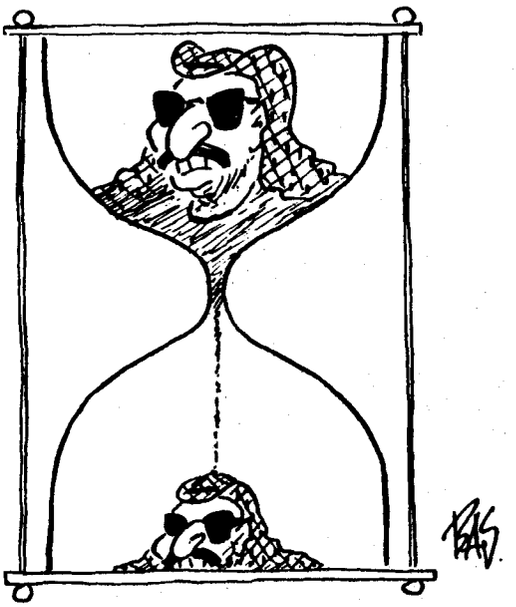
siege the Begin cabinet's sessions were stormy—and the implication was that some were having doubts about "Sharon's War" to secure the forty kilometers south of the Litani river. It was Israel's first aggressive, not defensive, war; the true provocation did not lie in Lebanon but within Israel's occupied territories, i.e., what Mr. Begin prefers to call Judea and Samaria—and which he clearly intends to annex.

By mid-July there were signs too that Israeli public opinion, significantly including some Oriental Jewish supporters of a "strong state," had begun to rouse itself from the moral paralysis generated by years of defensive isolation. If the original Jewish settlers could not be stopped by sheer might, what reason was there to think the Palestinians can be? Is there to be no end to this cycle of an eye for an eye? Such questions, never absent from an argumentative Israel, indeed they are her glory, are being asked now by many who previously seemed willing to let the army keep the peace. If such sentiments, at this point little more than the cracking of inflexible chauvinism, are to marshal the original Israeli majority that acclaimed the Camp David accords—and thus wanted justice for the Palestinians—it will require the emergence of a kind of leadership that up till now neither the Labor party's Shimon Peres nor Yitzhak Rabin has provided.

Defenders of Mr. Begin's rule argue persuasively that in carrying through on the return of Sinai to Egypt he has demonstrated his willingness to sacrifice in the interest of making peace with Arab neighbors. The point is well made; Begin is no monster, and more accommodating than the rejectionist Arab states. But giving way on Sinai is frequently converted into an apology for Begin's intransigence on the West Bank issue—and typically justifies a further blind eye toward the increasing brutality of Israeli occupation policy: mass arrests, deportations of mayors, destruction of homes, expropriation of Arab property, collective punishments, and the active sponsorship of Gush Emunim settlements. Both the spirit and the letter of the Camp David accords have been violated here, and unfortunately—for Israel itself no less than for the Palestinians—U.S. protest under both Carter and Reagan has lacked all credibility. It's been vacillating and paper-thin.

Arguably, it is the very severity of occupation policy, never wise but worsened under Menachem Milson's "civilian" regime lately, that has driven indigenous Palestinians, especially the young and educated, into the arms of the PLO. Transparently, the idea is to make life so unlivable that they'll go away—to topple King Hussein's Jordan, which official Israeli policy claims is the proper "homeland" for dissident Palestinians. The pre-1967 borders of Israel may be a folly to think of returning to; we think they are. But sooner or later Israel is going to have to sit down with the PLO, the de facto representative of Palestinians in the occupied territories. After months of secret negotiations with European governments, announced PLO moderate Issam Sartawi in Paris on July 13, Arafat was ready on the eve of the Lebanese invasion to recognize Israel's right to exist provided Israel reciprocated. If the often-promised pledge is ever delivered, an Israeli Sadat might build on that. Or a Philip Habib might.



But building on such overtures, incomplete as they are, will be more difficult now precisely because of the militaristic example Israel has just set for the region. At just the time when Arab governments, if not the PLO itself, were feeling the pressure of the Egyptian lead in finding diplomatic rather than violent resolutions to outstanding conflicts, the Lebanese invasion reverted to the old script; brute power is the way. A fragile Arab trust of Jesse's shoot was broken; the Arab image of a grasping Zionism confirmed. On the eve of the June 6 incursion, Egyptian foreign minister Boutros Boutros-Ghali was asserting in the pages of *Foreign Affairs* that "The success of the Camp David accords is bound to have a 'snowball' effect and give the peace process more strength, more dynamism, and more credibility in Arab eyes. Sooner or later," he wrote, "Arab governments are bound to join the peace process." Make that later—much later.

Does the Lebanon venture secure Israel's Egyptian flank? For the moment, high Egyptian officials report President Hosni Mubarak is standing firm against pressure to abrogate the Israeli treaty; it's a "point of honor." But the bitterness, the sense of betrayal, is palpable. "The adventure destroyed five years of work," said a Cairo official recently. "We were able to reassure Arab countries that you could sit around a table and talk with the Israelis, that there was hope." If Arab rejectionist fiber needed hardening, Sharon's War provided it. More, if Begin wanted to reinforce Moslem fundamentalists who would gladly depose Mubarak and return Egypt to the hostile Arab camp, he could hardly have plotted it better.

No, Israel's militarism may have secured its northern border for the time being, but the gain there is offset by the loss of a budding confidence elsewhere—in the surrounding Arab world, and here in the U.S.

MEANWHILE, IN BEIRUT

Back in 1954 and 1955, Israeli prime minister Moshe Sharett was recording in his diary conversations with David

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Ben-Gurion and Moshe Dayan regarding the former's proposal to buy a puppet Lebanese colonel—or even a major—who would declare himself the savior of a separatist Maronite state and invite the Israeli army into the territory south of the Litani river—which would eventually be annexed to Israel. Mind you, this was long before the Palestinians were driven out of Jordan (1970) to upset Lebanon's delicate political balance between Moslem and Christian. "This," wrote Sharett, "will be a crazy adventure," and he refused to countenance it.

Well, the thing didn't exactly happen that way, but it's close enough, crazy enough, to be unnerving. Menachem Begin has found a "dear friend" in the newly elected Lebanese president, the Phalangist leader Bashir Gemayel—albeit it's a friendship that all but discredits Gemayel for most Lebanese Moslems and is bound to heighten tension with most of the surrounding Arab governments. Gemayel's stature as a national leader is untested. The augurs are not promising. Up until now his forte has been that of godfather gangster who liquidates troublesome opponents, even among the right wing, with lightning efficiency. Patriot or terrorist? In the Middle East—and at our State Department lately—the nomenclature shifts depending on whose side you favor, e.g., Assembly President D'Aubisson in El Salvador, whom Gemayel resembles too closely for our taste. We hope Gemayel rises to his position—and changes his color and mode of action. "I am not a candidate for the partitioning of my fatherland," he said shortly before the election. If only he means that.

For otherwise the Syrian and Israeli armies are likely to encamp on a partitioned Lebanon for some while, with East Beirut serving as no more than the capital of a rump state in which a few local dons preside over a flourishing hashish and heroin trade—till now a major source of Gemayel's ample funds for Israeli arms.

On the other hand it should not be overlooked that before the Palestinians fled to Lebanon, that country stood as a singular example of a modernizing Arab society living in relative harmony with indigenous Jew and Christian. West Beirut alone had one hundred and twenty publishing houses, dozens of weeklies and dailies, four great universities. The population was cosmopolitan, informed, tolerant, eminently resourceful. The tradition is there to remember. Let us hope the last decade's violence has not effaced it.

GOING DOWN

With the national unemployment rate pushing ten percent, it's a familiar sight on television news programs: an unemployed auto worker or steel worker or what have you, his unemployment benefits exhausted, his savings rapidly disappearing, his mortgage payments overdue, unable to get food stamps, and praying that he does not have to go on welfare. If anyone blamed Ronald Reagan for his plight, you'd think he'd surely be that man. But up till now at least, the chances are high that our poor out-of-work character will tell the TV audience: "But we've got to give President Reagan's economic program a chance. It will take another year or two before we feel the benefits of Reagan's policies." With blind faith like that displayed over and over again, it's no wonder that Mr. Reagan's economic critics in and out of Congress sometimes despair of ever getting their message through to the people. Now, however, there are at least some signs that the public attitude toward Mr. Reagan's presidency may be changing.

According to the latest Gallup Poll, public support for President Reagan's performance in office has reached its lowest point ever. Forty-one percent of those polled approved "of the way Ronald Reagan is handling his job as president." Forty-seven percent disapproved, while twelve percent had no opinion. In a similar poll in June, forty-five percent approved and forty-five percent disapproved, with ten percent having no opinion. Approval of Mr. Reagan's foreign policy has dropped nine points since June; this too is now at its lowest point ever, with only thirty-six percent of those polled approving his handling of foreign policy, down from forty-five percent.

The details were no more cheering for Reagan supporters. Indeed, public approval of Mr. Reagan's performance outweighs disapproval in only two areas: natonal defense, by forty-eight to thirty-seven percent, and relations with the USSR, by forty-four percent to thirty-four percent. Even in these two areas support has slipped significantly since June. Disapproval of Mr. Reagan's policies predominates in these domestic issues: environmental issues, forty-one percent disapproval to thirty-four percent approval; energy, forty-nine percent disapproval to thirty-three percent approval; inflation, despite recent declines in the rate, fifty-eight percent disapproval to thirty-three percent approval; economic conditions in general, fifty-nine percent disapproval to thirty-one percent approval; unemployment, sixty-six percent disapproval to twenty-three percent approval.

In short, more and more people may still think Ronald Reagan is a very nice man, but they're no longer gung ho for most of his policies, at home or abroad, at least for now. This might make it seem like everything is coming up roses for the Democrats. But first, we think they have to persuade the public that they could do better, and that will take some doing.

JOHN CHEEVER, R.I.P.

HE WROTE: "The contents that I look for are a love of light and a determination to trace some moral chain of being." John Cheever found both, and often in dimly lit places, where most of us lead unexamined lives. In the modest passions and disappointments of ordinary men and women he saw, and helped us to see, the tragic and sublime.

Cheever was perhaps the last great and true optimist of Western letters. True because he was neither a sentimentalist nor an innocent. Great, because in Cheever's stories about homelessness, sexual desolation, alcoholism, and upper middle class poverty, such values as honor and love are made to seem sensible, necessary, and resilient.

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Cheever's life and work seem, unconsciously perhaps, devoted to the recovery of old-fashioned virtues and values. Antiquated words seem new and athletic when rejuvenated by Cheever's vision. He had faith in the sweetness, the pure wonder, of life. Hope in the capacity of men to learn civility and kindness. And charity to find what was meant to be noble in awkward, everyday gestures of affirmation.

"Admire the world," a father commanded his son in one of Cheever's novels, and this, I believe, was his own steady theme. In *this* sense he was a religious writer. Cheever was an Anglican. I have heard (and I hope that it is true) that he would slip outside church for a cigarette during the homily at daily Mass. But beyond his boundless sense of gratitude, which echoes Georges Bernanos ("all is grace"), Cheever offered no exposition in written or in spoken word of his religious faith. He said in an interview with his daughter: "I go to church to make my thanksgivings. Period. The level of introspection I enjoy on my knees is something I enjoy nowhere else."

I once wrote a fan letter to John Cheever. I had read *Falconer* and was swept up and astonished by its lyrical power, its love for imperfect men and women, its abiding sense of praise. To my great surprise Cheever wrote back. He was glad I liked the book. One is sustained by one's readers. One cannot know who they are. Readers of fiction are exempt from the knowledge and manipulation of public opinion data and research. Perhaps storytelling will keep personal communications alive in a mass age. By their fictions shall we know men.

Thomas Merton said of Flannery O'Connor that she did not remind him of Hemingway or Katherine Anne Porter but of Sophocles. John Cheever's literary lineage can be traced to Walt Whitman. But his love for the world, and his awareness of grace, is the heritage of Saint Paul.

What shall we say then of the passing of John Cheever? That he lived seventy good years and produced those stories, hymns to man and to God? Or that the work forever remains? Nay, more. For these things and for all John Cheever sought to celebrate, his own words at the close of *Falconer*: "Rejoice. Rejoice."

KEITH BURRIS

(Keith Burris, a previous contributor, teaches at Washington & Jefferson College in Washington, Pennsylvania.)

Report from France

A LOOK AT THE RECORD

JUDGING THE MITTERRAND REGIME

EVEN THE ONSET of August, when France normally closes down shop and heads for the beaches, did not still the debate over the record of the new socialist government.

There is a double standard used in judging French governments. Right-wing governments represented normalcy for so long that even their opponents could barely muster up enough energy to attack them after August 1.

Today, however, the right perceives every action of the government as a veritable threat to political liberties: the dissolution of the S.A.C. (an organization of political and non-political thugs tied to the R.P.R., the Rally for the Republic), changes in the structure of the Paris city government (a political error, to be sure, on the part of the left), etc. Underlying all this is the belief that the left has no right to be in office, that its presence is anomalous and inappropriate. Every decline in the polls of the President and Prime Minister is brandished as if it were a parliamentary vote of no-confidence; the right seems to think that President Mitterrand should have already packed his valises.

The left victory brought a hysterical reaction on the part of much of the propertied classes; I personally heard blood-curdling stories predicting Communist take-over, virtual expropriation of the rich, etc. When this did not happen, there was a sigh of relief. President Mitterrand appeared as a veritable savior of "good society" threatened by the sans-culottes of the Socialist and Communist parties. Recovered from their fear, such people now point with some satisfaction to the dismal economic situation, as proof that the socialists have no competence in governing. Unfortunately, the fears of the propertied classes help aggravate the economic crisis, and there are certainly some who favor an economic *politique du pire*.

But it is not only the right that measures the government by a double-standard. The left does so as well. The militants of the left did not come to power just to manage existing society; they wanted to change it. The left knows that if it fails it will be out of power for another generation; much of the tension it presently experiences is self-directed.

The French Socialist party, and the government it dominates, is far from homogeneous. It is divided by ideology, political origins, and by personalities. But the essential ideological cleavage within the party is between the more moderate "social-democrats," who wish to create a modern mixed economy and establish a "historic compromise" with Big Business, and left-wing socialists who wanted more

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thorough social transformation. Nevertheless, the current economic crisis has forced even the more radical elements of the party to adjourn projects of the latter sort.

It might have been hoped that a French socialist government could have raised, in the clearest possible terms, the question of what a socialist alternative really means in an advanced society, that it could have begun to experiment, for example, along the lines of worker control or participation in management. But the economic crisis has put all this on the back-burner.

In making economic recovery its priority (and such a choice was inescapable) the government necessarily put itself in a difficult situation. Recovery is probably impossible in a single country. But recovery will not come all by itself either, and the government's economic policy has been rightly criticized. Mitterrand did not explain to the public from the outset how grave the situation was; devaluation came too little and too late, the attitude of the government towards the business community was ambiguous, the *impôt sur la fortune* (a tax on the very wealthy) should either have been heavier or should not have been presented at all. Some cabinet ministers have not been great successes (but how could they have become experienced in governing without having governed?). Short-term policy has sometimes been inconsistent.

Nevertheless, the government does have a rational long-term economic policy, and it is this long-term policy which will determine its success or failure. The policy involves channeling investment into French economic growth (this explains why various banks had to be nationalized), this growth to be in sectors of advanced technology, like electronics, some of which were also nationalized. In short, the government sees the economic crisis today as the result of both the international situation and the backwardness of French industry. The difficulty with the long-term approach is that it will not produce quick results. One can only hope that short-term efforts, like the freezing of wages and prices can help the situation for the time being. One also hopes that the impulse to "do something now" will not lead the government into dubious adventures of a political sort.

There is no way of knowing that the government's program will work. But it makes sense, which is more than one can say for our own economic policy. And the socialists have four more years to make it work. The only question is whether what really matters is the logic of an economic policy or its compatibility with international conditions which may be dominated by other policies far less rational in nature.

STEVEN PHILLIP KRAMER

(Steven Phillip Kramer, a member of the history department at the University of New Mexico, has just returned from a stay in France.)

Of several minds: *John Garvey*

THE SEA FROZEN INSIDE US

TO CHANGE OR NOT TO CHANGE

THERE IS a fascinating problem with traditional religions. They can serve as challenges to every dimension of our life, as agents of transformation; or they can reassure us that we do not have to change at all. They can stand in the way of transformation. A revelation, a vision which was meant to break through our ordinary perceptions in order to free us becomes instead a comfortable and familiar part of an old landscape, or a piece of our soul's furniture, something like the accustomed feeling of a bannister we touch every night on our way up to bed: it is a comfort to know that whatever else happens in our life, this at least will remain the same. This is so persistent a temptation that for some people it is a religion's main use, its reason for being.

Kafka wrote a letter once in which he said something which applies to religion as well as to literature: "If the book we are reading does not wake us, as with a fist hammering on our skull, why then do we read it? So that it shall make us happy? Good God, we would also be happy if we had no books, and such books as make us happy we could, if need be, write ourselves. But what we must have are those books which come upon us like ill-fortune, and distress us deeply, like the death of one we love better than ourselves, like suicide. A book must be an ice-ax to break the sea frozen inside us."

It may seem strange to compare this to the Gospel, which means "good news," when Kafka speaks of ill-fortune and distress. The Gospel speaks of life, and he speaks of death and suicide. But the good news of the Gospel is not cheery, and the life involved is a life so directly related to death that we place the cross at the center of our places of worship. There can be no resurrection without it. I am uncomfortable writing this, because we have a way of talking easily of what death (not to speak of life) means, as if from our vantage point we had clarity about these things. As Kafka said, we are frozen inside. We may boil with feeling, but it is a feeling remarkably unrelated to the real situation of any human being outside ourselves, and is only related to our own situation in a confused and murky way..

Ordinarily we feel another's pain only by a kind of analogy: I would hate to be in that position (whatever it is), and try to imagine it. Seldom does the misfortune of another strike us as a misfortune which we suffer ourselves. When we allow another's misfortune to affect our life in any way, we think of this as a moral luxury. Isn't it decent of us to behave compassionately? (We could, after all, have chosen not to.) We regard compassionate action as a matter of choice, something done "from the goodness of our hearts," and admire those who are tirelessly com-

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passionate, as if they were only doing more frequently, and with more energy, what we sometimes do ourselves.

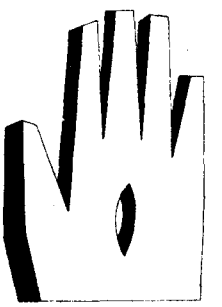
But in regarding compassion this way we are more sealed into ourselves than we were when we were unreflectively selfish. Francis of Assisi said that God led him to lepers, who had previously repelled him, and he "entered into the pain of their hearts." Most of what we consider compassion is not only *not* like that, but contains an element of removal which makes entering the pain of another absolutely impossible. This removal involves an element of satisfaction or gratitude that we are not ourselves suffering as the other does; it is a form of psychic self-protection. It is a self-protection which collapses sometimes, when someone we love deeply suffers. The agony of someone we love *helplessly*, as we love our children, pierces us; it is something we feel in our hearts, and it may be that it is important to us spiritually in direct proportion to our helplessness before it. The love which is not a matter of choice but a condition of our being, the love we cannot help, which ties us—however we *feel* about it—to another, is most like God's love, or the love Saint Francis was led to.

We put so much stock in feelings, as if it were primarily through feeling that we could come to understand the world. To question this idea, or to doubt that in some significant way we are the sum of our feelings, is nearly heretical.

Christianity is currently associated with states of mind, convictions, proper as opposed to improper emotions; or it is considered an institutional allegiance, or a heritage to which one ought to be loyal; or it is considered a system of ideas. As something which demands a thorough transformation of everything in us, everything we are, it is invisible.

Our ordinary understanding of Christianity has everything to do with the Enlightenment reduction of religion to the realm of the subjective. Its validity is seen as dependent on the depth of the emotions it arouses, or the tenacity (if not the depth) of our emotional commitment to it. I do not want to return to a world in which Christianity was as taken for granted as we take the law of gravity, if there ever was such a relaxed version of Christendom. Unless the Gospel comes to us fresh, as real news, what we receive is not the Gospel but a story which uses the same words, characters, and descriptions of events to *turn the Gospel into its opposite*: it becomes a reassurance that nothing really has to change, as long as we obey the rules and don't stray too far ethically. But one of the few good things about the world of established Christendom was that Christianity was seen as something so much more real than emotional or psychological response, so much more like the moon or the sun, that even those celestial symbols were less important than trinitarian and angelic ones. This understanding made it clear that our emotions are at best the psychic shadows of real spiritual events.

In a discussion of the Lord's prayer in his excellent book *Living Prayer* (Templegate, 1966) Metropolitan Anthony Bloom says that to pray "deliver us from the evil one" requires "such a reassessment of values and such a new attitude that we can hardly begin to say it otherwise than in a cry, which is as yet unsubstantiated by an inner change in us. We feel a longing which is not yet capable of achievement; to ask God to change us in the trial is to ask for a radical change in our situation." Later in the same chapter Bloom says that one of our dangers is the fact that "when we realize that we can no longer depend upon all that we are accustomed to find reliable around us, we are not yet ready to renounce those things." He speaks of the need to acknowledge this fact at its deepest point, where "despair has led us to faith," and emphasizes the importance of making sure that we do not despair of final victory but rather "of the means we have used to reach it."



What does all of this have to do with traditional religion? I am afraid that for most of us—priests, laypeople, religious—the churches serve too often as means of reinforcing emotions we do not want to see challenged in any basic way. When Jesus encountered people their response was either defensive, or one which involved an awakening—in Kafka's terms, a thaw. The presence of Jesus transformed everything.

We are not comfortable (and there is no way to be comfortable with this idea) with knowledge that, if Christianity is true, it changes everything. Because this causes discomfort, it becomes necessary to make Christianity more comfortable, to tell the same story in a way which reverses its moral, rather than succumb to a discomfort, a despair, and a distress with the means of self-protection we have developed to keep us from being changed. But to feel that distress is the beginning of change, and is necessary.

Our approach to religion and religious education now aims too often at arousing appropriate feelings in us, in the hope that the feelings will lead the feeler to something deeper and more substantial. Sometimes the feelings, particularly the most powerful ones, are seen as proof that we are on the right track. This is precisely the wrong way to go. Liturgy, spiritual direction, and the other guides we have ought to make more profound demands on us. They should not take our feelings for granted as good things, but ought to force us to question our feelings as deeply as we ought to question our thoughts. Everything about us needs transformation. There is no better proof of that than the ordinary state of ordinary Christians. We claim to believe that there is someone who loves us so deeply that he died to show us the depths of that love, and because of that love offers us a life which we cannot imagine. Our distractions are so thick, our sleep so profound, that it took his death just to get our attention. On the whole we remain relatively unmoved by this fact. The gnostics compared our ordinary state of mind to sleep, to dreaming, to drunkenness. They may have been heretical in some ways, but certainly not here.

JOHN GARVEY

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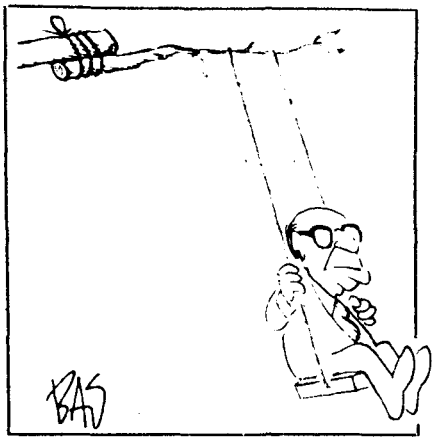
THE WAR IN LEBANON IS NOT THE REAL WAR



Birth of a Zionist

ARTHUR A. COHEN

FOR MANY YEARS I have been a non-Zionist. No longer. My fence-straddling was no good. Whether or not I personally delight in my conversion is beside the point. Events constrain. Zionism is a politics for the contemporary Jew and a polity for the State of Israel. Israel is the state of my distant and far-flung family and a bone of resentment to be chewed by many of my non-Jewish neighbors. Either way—as political movement or as ideological soup meat—Zionism is unavoidable. I am a Zionist today. I have become a Zionist because never before have I felt Zionism so profoundly threatened—not by outsiders, not by enemies, nor hostile encampments beyond the borders of Israel (and there are surely these), but by the Jewish leadership of the State of Israel itself.

The Israeli Army (known conveniently as the IDF, the Israeli Defense Force) invaded Lebanon in early June. I arrived in Israel on the fifth day of the war and remained for three weeks, long enough to see what was happening. I speak Hebrew quite well and could talk to Israelis. I met many Israeli soldiers hitchhiking to and from the war, crowded with their machine guns into the back seat of the little car I drove throughout the nation. They talked. Mostly I listened. What I write now is not reportage. It is a document of my own political transformation from non-Zionist into Zionist. And so, having been clear about from where I come and having asserted the facts of my politicization, I must tell you something of my reasoning and my conclusions.

There is no question in my mind that the Israeli invasion of Lebanon was manipulated by the Israeli government. Undoubtedly the well-entrenched and supplied PLO had maintained steady pressure on northern Galilee. Many communities regarded themselves as under a capricious siege, never knowing when they would have to resume life in the shelters as the Katyusha shells landed. Many Israelis were killed. Many were wounded. It was feared, the Israeli government makes clear, that the PLO might well have stepped up its attacks on the north, destroying much and killing more. A cease-fire, always fragile in the Middle East, had been in place for months, periodically broken by PLO gunfire or Israeli reprisals. Unfortunately a splinter faction of Palestinian resistance—eminently terrorist—attempted to assassinate the Israeli Ambassador to London. Israel retaliated for this provocation with a sustained bombing raid on Beirut. The PLO answered with concerted shelling of the northern settlements. Several days later the IDF moved into Lebanon in full-scale invasion.

The Israel operation is called *Shalom leGalil* (Peace for Galilee), a phrase and a raison d'être worked out well before the train of events unfolded that provided Israel with an occasion for massive response. During the early days of the invasion, Ariel Sharon, Israel's Minister of Defense, indicated that he wished the IDF to establish a clean zone of not more than forty-five kilometers which would prevent PLO shelling of Israel's border settlements. Obviously this was a foolish or deceptive announcement. Whether General Sharon actually persuaded the Prime Minister and his Cabinet of the viability of such a program remains to be discovered. But everyone knows that an army does not grind to a halt. Given the initiative, it takes it; given an enemy that continues to fight, it continues to attack. By the fifth day of the war Israel had exceeded its artificial stopline. Shortly thereafter it reached Beirut and encircled it.

MANY PEOPLE think that the war being fought in Lebanon is the real war and the only war. It is because of this mistake that they take unreasonable sides. They attend to this northern war, ignoring the other violence going on in the same area of the world. By comparison with them the war in Lebanon is small. As we now know, the homeless are vastly fewer than were originally announced by the Lebanese Red Cross. And so are the wounded. And so are the killed. It is acknowledged that much of the destruction visited on Sidon and Tyre

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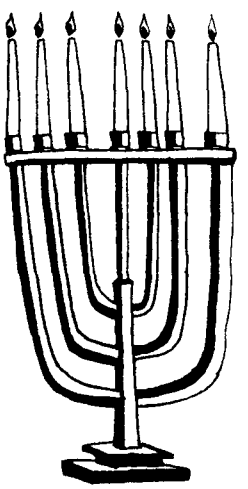
was accomplished years before by the PLO in its war with the Lebanese for control of Lebanon. At that time, that war of 1975-1976, tens of thousands of people were killed, wounded, and dispossessed, but I recall no international *cri de coeur*. Nor was there protest when President Assad leveled the Syrian city of Hama to destroy his enemies or now when the war between Iran and Iraq is admitted by both sides to have cost well over a hundred thousand casualties. What goes on vis-à-vis Israel is selective indignation, undoubtedly promoted by a series of naive and prejudicial notions: that Israelis can be swayed by moral pressure whereas Arabs cannot; that Israel can be persuaded to leave off bombing Beirut, but Arafat will never release his innocent hostages in West Beirut. But this would be only part of it.

The greater reason for selective indignation is that Jews in the postwar world have succeeded in training both philo-Semites and anti-Semites how to respond to them. For the one, Jews are expected to fight moral, just, and defensive wars. It is for these presumably that the Israeli doctrine of *tahor haNeshek* (purity of arms) was referred to by Prime Minister Begin before departing Jerusalem for the United States in June. Begin once again praised the IDF for the care and concern they showed in the handling of their weaponry that the innocent might be spared. Unfortunately there are no innocents in war and bullets go without moral name-tags. Most certainly cluster and phosphorus bombs are not dropped with "purity of arms." Purity of arms is a moral persiflage. It is immaterial that the Prime Minister and the Chief Rabbinate in Jerusalem make use of such idiotic language. Philo-Semites are embarrassed; the Jews are misbehaving. As for anti-Semites, the Jews have never been other than aggrandizing, aggressive, murderous. Such an image may displease some Jews, but there are many others whom it unreasonably delights: at last Jews can be as wicked as they are imagined, but this time in the open—without stealth, cabal, backroom dealing, or subversive shenanigans.

It is for the duplicitous image of the moral Jew compelled to wage immoral warfare and the immoral Jew doing his wont that the Prime Minister of Israel can solemnly intone his moral litanies about refusing to bow his knee to world censure. The world is either down on the Jews for killing when they shouldn't kill at all (while presumably it's unexceptionable for Shi'ites to murder Sunnites or the reverse since Westerners can't be expected to understand *jihad*) or else down on Jews for killing innocents whom they have forcibly expelled from Israel, robbed of their lands, and are now trouncing with gleeful excess in their Lebanese diaspora. So it goes. Down on Jews. Down on Israelis. You can't satisfy your friends much less please your enemies. And Prime Minister Begin can begin again his exhumations of Dresden, Berlin, and Auschwitz. Long live paranoia: nobody likes the Jews—not when they're weak, not when they're strong.

But this is most certainly not the whole story.



IT IS HERE that my politicization begins. For many years I was able (with considerable conviction) to describe the Palestinian flight from Israel during 1948 as a decision of panic, reinforced by the call of the Mufti of Jerusalem warning those who remained behind that they risked massacre. Of course, there was one terrible massacre of Palestinian Arabs undertaken by the underground force commanded by the present Prime Minister of Israel. (David Ben-Gurion was perhaps thinking of this massacre when he asserted that, given power, Begin would "bring unmitigated disaster over Israel.") Although the perpetrators were subsequently punished, the basic argument stood: Palestinians fled their lands and went into exile.

Alas, it was not as one-sided as I had imagined. Many fled, to be sure, terrorized by their own leadership but many were harassed into leaving by the Israelis. The warfare of right against right had begun in earnest. During the two decades after the founding of the State of Israel, the refugee camps grew in Jordan, in Gaza, and elsewhere. The great Arab nations did absolutely nothing to absorb or assimilate their brethren. They helped finance the refugee camps as though to make certain that the sore would continue to fester. Nor, in those days, were the Western powers interested in solving the refugee problem. (Can it be imagined what a Marshall Plan for the refugees would have accomplished during the 1950s had the modest funds been used to begin the industrialization and development of modern agronomy in Jordan? The refugees would certainly have continued to hanker for Jaffa or Acre or the Galilee, but at least they would have hankered without pain, disease, and hunger. It is suffering that makes for *idées fixes*, not political passion.)

The preemptive strike of the Israeli Defense Force in 1967 was wholly justified in my Zionist lights. Had the Arab states invaded Israel they might well have destroyed her. Israel won a lightning victory of incredible proportions, fighting and winning a tank war in the Sinai that was the largest in modern history. All this is known. Israel conquered more than it had ever hoped to conquer. And with the conquered territories begins the problem of the Israel that invaded Lebanon.

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There is no such thing as a benign conquest or a benign occupation. Israel today occupies the West Bank and Gaza (having returned the Sinai in an unparalleled and still obscure gesture of generosity) as a "belligerent occupant," a legal concept spelled out in the Geneva and Hague Conventions. As Michael Reisman, Professor of International Law at Yale University, has defined such occupation, the law views "the seizure of territory as a tactical but temporary necessity of war; until a peace treaty is signed and the territory is returned." With such a treaty in view the occupation is mandated to balance military requirements of the occupying power with the human needs of the conquered population. Although it is recognized that the occupying power has complete control of the land and its people, the law clearly limits the exercise of such legal power consistent with military and security requirements.

It will come as no surprise that following the Yom Kippur war of 1973, the Arab states, seeking to standardize a political response to Israel while at the same time continuing to hold themselves aloof from any moral obligation to the Palestinians, recognized that the West Bank and Gaza belonged to the Palestinian people (a recognition concurred in by Jordan which had annexed the territory in 1948) and urged that the PLO be regarded as the only legitimate political representative of the Palestinians. Given the militancy of the PLO Charter which calls for the destruction of Israel, Israel has refused and continues to refuse to enter into any direct negotiations with the PLO (whom it refers to in its official news broadcasts and press releases as "terrorists" pure and simple—no differently, it should be noted, than the PLO which refers to Israel as "the Zionist entity"). This stand-off of policy, language, and confrontation must be regarded as an impasse either to be broken by a softening of PLO intransigence towards Israel or by a more forthcoming and generous response on the part of Israel towards what is now a badly beaten adversary.

THE SITUATION, however, is rendered more complex and—to my lights—desperate by the fact that both parties to the fundamental conflict do not spell out their covert intentions.

In public, one can find Palestinian intellectuals and political leaders who will tell Israelis in fluent Hebrew (or English) that they are quite prepared to recognize Israel as a *fait accompli* and that they are willing to negotiate autonomy on the West Bank as a way-station toward statehood. Unfortunately they are not willing to say the same thing in Arabic for home consumption. They revert to type among their own constituency. There is no one with whom to negotiate, no manifest leadership, and no efficient political machinery for eliciting such leadership.

The Israelis, for their part, do not seem to be interested in encouraging moderate leadership. As has been documented time and again (most recently in Rafik Halabi's extremely balanced and temperate *The West Bank Story*) the Israelis have effectively smashed independent political activity in the occupied territories, claiming, naturally and inevitably, security reasons for their suppression or simply *lèse majesté*. The result has been that whatever moderation existed has been radicalized.

Obviously every Palestinian Arab is today a supporter of the PLO. Why should it not be so? Arabs are discriminated against within Israel, denied equal opportunity to compete for jobs, apartments, education, the benefits of the Israeli economy. Even though their status is vastly improved over what it was, they are to the Jews of Israel what the Jews in Arab lands were to their ancestors—*dhimmis*, protected second-raters.

The disadvantages of being a Palestinian in the occupied territories are even greater, as can be imagined. It is well conceded that many Israeli industrial and agricultural enterprises continue to import day labor over the Green Line separating the territories from Israel at scandalously inferior wages, even employing many thousands of children for a daily pittance of soup and pocket change. The revelation of this condition produced a full-scale inquiry in the Israeli Knesset, but the situation remains uncorrected and existing laws remain unenforced.

Can it be an amazement that Palestinians are endlessly angry with Israel? I find it saddening, demoralizing, depressing that it is so, but I no longer find it amazing that there are no moderates on the West Bank. Moderate for what and for the sake of what?

The predicament is rendered even more extreme by the increasingly tolerated perception that the Begin government is moving towards annexation of the Occupied Territories (perhaps this is the reason for graciously returning Sinai, since someone—Egypt—wanted it back, but no one except Israel and the dismembered Palestinians want the West Bank). The installation of a civilian governor for the territories, although it creates the illusion of peaceful conduct, actually constitutes a further step in the direction of normalizing annexation. The numerous settlements that have been established on nearly 30 percent of the occupied lands reflects no legitimate interest in security since it is generally conceded that most of the settlements do not occupy strategic positions, have no security advantages and, in time of war, would be speedily evacuated.

The value of the settlements is to assert a presence, a presence linked to Begin's Biblical monomania, in many cases accompanied by a Biblical passage that cites the name of the settlement's location in Holy Writ. In many cases the land has been correctly purchased, but in a no less grievous number of cases the land has been expropriated (and under Israeli law, expropriation justified by reasons of security, is difficult to contest).

In general, the truculence and unsophistication of the military government, the brutal measures used by the army to suppress hostile response from the conquered (the remains of a number of bulldozed Arab dwellings in East Jerusalem were pointed out to me as having been the consequence of rock-throwing incidents against Israeli soldiers), the bloody riots, the firing of elected officials, the censorship of books, the closing of Bir Zeit University and other institutions on the West Bank are not evidence of a benign and peaceful occupation. Worse than brutal, it is a stupid occupation and one that

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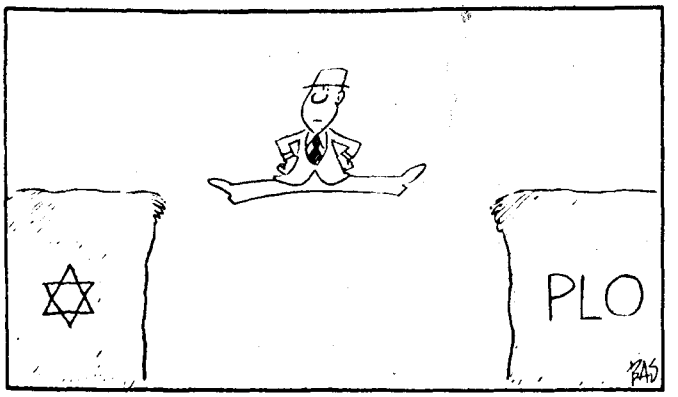
makes many Israelis, sensitive to the historical foundations of their country, shudder with anxiety for themselves and the generations to follow.

But I wonder as well about my fellow American Jews. It is the case that the opposition to the Begin government is profound in the State of Israel, probably not profound enough to bring his government down, although many Israelis observed to me that if the Lebanese crisis is not resolved with a clear-cut political or military victory for Israel, Begin could fall. Israeli unease has little or no analogue among American Jews. Upon my return to America in early August I found no mood of doubt or moral uncertainty, only militancy at its most perverse and misguided.

American Jews appear to stand four-square behind official Begin policy (with the exception of the distinguished band of intellectuals, artists, and writers who have signed protest advertisements). They are endlessly hostile to the Palestinian Arabs, more so than Israelis. They are anxious to have a crushing victory over the PLO, a smashing of its structure, indeed, a humiliation and destruction of the Palestinian will to self-determination and statehood. They are, it would seem, willing to have Israel fight against the Arabs to the last Israeli.

Am I being unfair in this assessment? Indubitably. The vocal sectors of American Jewry are, to my view, morally and emotionally deprived. They are passive participants in the real struggle. Israel is not their state. They know it and have no intention of rectifying the situation. But they make up for their flaccidity of Zionist conviction with stridency of voice—hectoring, damning, opposing anyone who wishes to talk quietly or proposes an alternative. Those opposing the invasion of Lebanon as a political and moral mistake (and there were 100,000 Israelis in a "Peace Now" demonstration in Tel-Aviv on July 3) are considered traitors and enemies of the Jewish people.

Nonsense, but still nonsense with an origin and history. The American Jewish community has Israel—the raw political reality, stripped of clear moral and religious imperatives—like a bone in its throat. Its claims upon the Jewish pysche are too deep, too complex, too emotionally charged to yield anything but confusion when challenged. Where once there was a Zionist leadership in this country (during the days when most Jews were non-Zionist or anti-Zionist), capable of spelling out the implications of the dream and the political obstacles that impeded its realization, today there are only spokesmen and rhetoricians. There are few first-rate minds of educated intellect and solid Jewish scholarship among the major figures conducting the representation of Jewish life and aspirations in this country. They are all Jewish civil servants, doing time for the Jews. And if there is malaise and bad faith among the so-called service organizations, there is no less egregious pusillanimity among the rabbinate who know perfectly well the Biblical imperative "Justice, justice, you shall pursue" but are too terrorized by their constituencies to assume moral leadership.



As a new Zionist, it is clear to me now that Israel is beleaguered, beleaguered by the Arabs and beleaguered by the Jews. The Arabs remain intransigent. The Begin government and his American supporters match them. There is little doubt, however, that the long run is with the Arabs. They are more numerous and one day will discover what numbers can supply if they ever acquire leadership along the way. The jeopardy into which such a cohesive Arab majority in the Middle East could place the State of Israel is much more immense than the acts of terror and the rhetorical bombast of the PLO.

Presently it is an ideal match between Begin's moral solemnities and an American Jewish community that does not realize the extent to which it is working out to the last Israeli its generational guilt for helplessness before Hitler. The psychological guess that the exuberant and excessive support that American Jews have given Begin derives from the fact that Begin speaks a diaspora rhetoric in Polish Jewish accents about a new-found militancy, might, moral independence that listens to no one.

Begins speaks a cheap rhetoric and American Jews love it. It makes them feel good presumably to have an overseas spokesman who can express their helplessness and frustration in the American diaspora they never want to leave. What they get from Begin is the opportunity to pay off the guilt for having survived the Holocaust unscathed and ineffectual. Begin is making payment on American Jewish guilt and receiving adulation for being able to rub the world's nose in its own historical cesspool. Of course, what Begin realizes is that he rubs the nose of American Jewry as well and raises vast sums of money for the exercise. It is, in short, a caricature of moral debate. But it has, it must be admitted, succeeded to this point: there is no American foreign policy formed to deal with Israel and the Palestinians. The greater the moralistic outcry from Reagan, the more transparent Begin's self-righteousness. I have my suspicions about why this is so, but these entail judgments upon the competency of the present administration to define the relevance of morality or thinking to politics at all.

In the present crisis, it is critical that the real issue not be overlooked in the mounting American sentimentality about cruel wars. Wars are always cruel, but they are not only cruel, but corrupt and evil as well, if they yield nothing to the imagination of peace. The real issue of Israel and the PLO in Lebanon is that they have no business being there in the first place. They should really be back home on the West Bank arguing over Palestinian self-determination and the formation of a Palestinian state.

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'MY FAITH HAD ALREADY TAKEN A WALK'

Confessions of an inconsistent opportunist

SAMUEL HUX

I WAS BROUGHT up a Fundamentalist and remained so roughly until of college age. Then I moved swiftly through Roman Catholicism, unconfirmed, to Episcopalianism, and I suppose my name is still on the books of the latter. That traverse looks like a considered movement from one denominational extreme to the other, and then a considered theological compromise leaning a little to the high church end of the spectrum. But my memory serves me better than that.

I flirted with Roman Catholicism as a cultural rebellion about the same time that I became a secret Fellow Traveler with Communists, surrounded by Dixiecrats. And I became an Episcopalian shortly after having become an English major, reading T. S. Eliot, C. S. Lewis, W. H. Auden, all those initial-named Anglo-Catholics, and convinced that John Henry Newman should never have left the Anglican Oxford Movement for Rome, and wondering if he'd be called "J.H." if he hadn't. I didn't *then* lose my faith; obviously my faith had already taken a walk or I'd not have been able to make of religion such a trivial game.

The Anglo-Catholicism, confirmed though it was, lasted no longer than the Roman. I can remember afterwards sharing confessions with some lapsed Roman Catholic friends about the agony of having lost one's faith. Their agony was real, I assumed; mine was not.

I think I'd have liked for someone to speak of me as Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote in one of his diaries of Herman Melville. Hawthorne met Melville in Liverpool after several years' separation, I think during Melville's transit to the Holy Land. Melville can neither believe, wrote Hawthorne, nor rest easy in his unbelief; he reasons of providence and its absence endlessly; he is a noble man, says Hawthorne, and much worthier of salvation then most of us. I'd not have deserved a hundredth of that; my self-romanticizing was absurd, another slippery game. But I matured and reached a point when I could admit to myself I felt no agony at all: I couldn't even remember *when* I had lost my faith, it had been so long before. And there I rested easy.

Until—no date that I can think of, just a gradual uneasiness gradually perceived—I began to realize that I felt contempt for those militant in their unbelief, and something close to incomprehension of those for whom it was of no concern. And then—cutting many musings short—I realized that I was the sort of person about whom I write this essay:

Someone with an equal distrust of, or lack of talent for, *both* Faith and Unbelief. I judge that that's a fairly common state of mind (or soul): little recognized, probably, but an experience shared by a sizable if silent minority. My particular *mode* of that shared experience, a mode I'd not presume to stick someone else with, I call being an inconsistent opportunist.

THIS REMAINS a predominantly secular culture that we live in. The television spectacular—a kind of liturgical Lawrence Welk Show, presided over by the showman-clergyman of the Saint Carnegie Temple of Positive Christianity with his delivery and substance half pitchman, half undergraduate sociology C student, and attended by a congregation of smiling, self-satisfied faces one thinks he's seen already as audience of "Let's Make a Deal"—is more dramatic than quiet worship at the local church; but this mawkishness hardly signals a challenge to the secularism of our age.

Our religious institutions thrive best either when parishioners are not burdened with theological questions, or when "theology" means simply some catchy form of the "social gospel." Our intellectual life is not actively antagonistic to religious considerations; but is mostly unconcerned with them, except in so far as religion can be *studied* as one human phenomenon among hundreds of others. Both believers and non-believers are welcome in our politics, as in our homes, so long as the non-believer is not aggressive about it, so long as the believer does not appear excessively righteous (can admit to occasional lust, for instance). A kind of balance of powers, of sensibilities rather, prevails, leaning actually a little in tone and substance to the secular.

So I take it as a characteristic of our time that, in intellectual discourse, unbelief does not *have* to be explained or justified—which is not like saying that faith *cannot* be explained. The imperviousness of faith *to* explanation suggests a mystery, and the recognition that there are needs beyond the capacities of the rational. The exemption of unbelief *from* explanation suggests, in part, the recognition that most things can be explained with no reference to the religious (I do not have to thank God for green grass and tides; I can say

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something about chlorophyll and such and lunar actions upon the earth), and, in part, suggests a kind of presumption, a certain laziness parading as reason, an easy subscription to the current fashions of wisdom. Since I have a personal, constitutional mistrust of any wisdom not ancient, it's not a subscribing to the current that leads me to beg off explaining my unbelief . . . with which I'm dissatisfied. Rather, since I think that unbelief, as the prefix suggests, is a passive thing, an absence, I think it more challenging, curious, and revealing to try to explain my faith . . . which fails me.

Recall Pascal's "wager" from the *Pensées*.

> You must either believe or not believe that God is—which will you do? Your human reason cannot say. A game is going on between you and the nature of things which at the day of judgment will bring out either heads or tails. Weigh what your gains and your losses would be if you should stake all you have on heads, on God's existence: if you win in such a case you gain eternal beatitude; if you lose, you lose nothing at all. If there were an infinity of chances, and only one for God in the wager, still you ought to stake your all on God; for though you surely risk a finite loss by this procedure, any finite loss is reasonable, even a certain one is reasonable, if there is but the possibility of infinite gain. Go, then, and take holy water, and have masses said; belief will come and stupify your scruples. . . . Why should you not? At bottom, what have you to lose?

Actually, this is not Pascal speaking directly, but William James's summary of the Frenchman's challenge in his essay "The Will to Believe," which I quote for the sake of compactness and because of the following.

Pascal's wager is what James would call a "genuine option," the specifics of ritual—holy water and such—aside. An option to be "genuine" does not need to conform to the demands of scientific verification, but must be "living" (a real cultural possibility for one, as belief in the *Mahdi*, James's example of a "dead" option for most Westerners, isn't), "forced" and unavoidable ("Either accept this truth or go without it," which leaves no third alternative), and "momentous" rather than trivial.

I ask myself: is faith really a genuine option for me, living, forced, and momentous? And I find that it is—although not precisely in terms of the "gain" Pascal writes of: immortality. Rather, it is a genuine option not waiting upon empirical permissions when I think of *Authority*, and when I think of . . . but that gets me ahead of myself.

I "BELIEVE" in God when it is intellectually useful for me to do so (I am, as I've said, an opportunist), or when a train of thought leads me back to a point beyond which there is no explaining. For instance: I believe with most people that some things are right and some wrong, although we often don't agree about what the "are" means. If one says it is wrong to go without sleep, there's no problem: "wrong" simply means "unhealthy" and we need appeal to no higher authority than the body. But if one says it is wrong to commit murder, my problems begin. I agree that it is—but who says so?

Since I believe that man is, by human nature, more beast than angel, am more convinced by Hobbes than by Hume, by Freud than by Fromm, by Calvin than by Emerson, I cannot say that murder is wrong because unnatural; and since one can easily observe nature pruning itself with no regard for this frail flower or that poor prey. I can imagine someone constructing a semi-Malthusian justification of the human letting of human blood, murderer as agent like frost or tiger . . . and who can tell of the mysteries of the random selection of victims? If one says that murder is wrong because *we* say it is, that saying institutionalized in our laws, and that one need look to no higher authority than our own collective need, the necessity to protect ourselves from ourselves—then, in that case, I'd not scoff at the argument, recognizing a practical sufficiency.

But . . . I'd wonder how a species as aggressive as man got a distance on itself enough to try to limit itself, if a reasoned guess at self-interest and chances of longevity is really the answer. And I'd wonder: if I should decide to ignore those laws which are in my, your, self-interest, pull a trigger at whomever I choose, am I "wrong" or simply anti-social and are they really the same? And I'd wonder—since there clearly are distinctions to be made between laws, this prohibition an extremely old and near universal one, and this other circumscribed in time and place (You may *not* marry a Bantu!)—I'd wonder if the very fact of those distinctions doesn't mean that there is Authority and there are local authorities. And I have to know that when I say, following the above, that this is wrong because we've agreed to agree, and this is Wrong because it *is*, then I've pushed back to that place beyond explanations, to very close to a burning, quaking mountain, and that if I do not say "God" I'm only waiting for someone else to pronounce it for me, knowing that's a responsibility someone will assume.

And if another should advise me that . . . listen, you don't *have* to go back beyond the argument from self-interest and insurance-for-longevity, because, can't you see?, it works more often than not; then, I have to answer: yes, *I do* have to. This is *my* mode of a shared experience, remember. These are *my* confessions.

BUT, ONCE AGAIN the conjunction *but* . . . I said before that if I don't say "God" I'm only waiting for someone else to pronounce the name. Reconsidering, however, that's not necessarily so. I might be perfectly well satisfied by one of those disembodied metaphysical designations, "Ethical First Principle" or some such. To conceive of such requires that one follow one of several philosophical directions beyond the utilitarian, but does not really require Faith, not as I understand it. The "genuine option" turns out to be, well . . . *sort* of genuine.

For I am of a certain cultural conditioning, spent more years, and formative ones, as a Fundamentalist than I have as a reader of, say, Spinoza, and consequently to know that I'm hearing about "God" as I understand that name I have to hear not alone philosophical talk about first principles but "God-

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talk," something as insistently orthodox and as *assuming of* faith, no matter how baffling I find the language, as Karl Barth's: "Knowledge of the truly one and only God gains this meaning when it is brought about by this truly one and only God Himself. God is the one and only One and provides Himself to be such by His being both the Author of His own Being and the source of all knowledge of Himself."

My conditioned attention slips even when I read in Augustine, whom I normally revere,

> The Lord then said to Moses: "I am Who Am. . . ." He did not say: "I am God," or "I am the Author of the world," or "I am the Creator of all things," or "I am the Guardian. . . ." Rather, he said only this: "I am Who Am." But, O Lord, our God, what then is not of all that You have created? Is the sky not? Is the earth not also? Must we understand this "I am Who Am" as if everything else were not? . . . [No.] . . . Understand that "truly to be" means: to be always in the same way.

For to hear that God is The Immutable, or something like that, means to me that he is a metaphysical principle that I *grasp*, but the grasping does not compel me to *worship* Him (it?); or if I do worship, then the experience of worshipping is no more than a metaphor, with becoming rituals, for what I might do with legs asprawl, pencil tapping my teeth, in a philosophy classroom. The Divine has to be, such is my apparently incorrigible inheritance, something which sounds less like an idea than like a figure (bearded and upon a throne not necessary), not Ethical Principle or The Immutable, but Creator of the Universe, Personal Savior, the Judge.

And here the tone of urbane distance I've been trying to practice deserts me. For "God" becomes real to me, the option compelling, not when I seek something to love or worship . . . but when I feel the urgent necessity of passionate anger, need something, almost . . . to hate.

I'd best try to control the passions here and attempt to make myself understood—and that perhaps best incrementally.

JACOB'S NEW NAME, after the "wrestling," "Israel" (*Genesis*, 32:28), has alternately been translated "the champion of God" and "He who strives with God." The latter, I confess, seems righter to me, although I am no Biblical scholar and am reading subjectively. And in the words *strive, strife*, I cannot help but read some degree of resistance, and . . . injury. To those whom the gods have chosen, grace comes like a violation—reasoned Aeschylus; and that observation might serve as description of both the Biblical and historical careers of the chosen people.

It is the God of *Job* I have in mind: wagering, punishing his servant Job although "there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God, and escheweth evil;" badgering Job to admit he has no right to ask for explanations ("Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without understanding? . . . Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?") and when Job has yielded ("Behold, I am vile. . . . I will lay mine hand upon my mouth"), badgering yet again, flaunting his credentials, a

manic display of divine irritation and petulance ("Hast thou an arm like God? or canst thou thunder with a voice like him?"); and, in an act which has to be judged as arbitrary, since the Lord according to his own thundering owes no one anything, restoring all and more to his afflicted servant, *and* announcing his wrath against Job's three friends because they had dared to suggest that God could not act but within a moral code and Job must have been guilty of ill-doing to have suffered such afflictions, which strikes Him as an audacious human attempt to justify the actions of the Almighty, *and* subtly suggesting to us the readers that if we think God *was* bound to repay Job and the whole ordeal was a test, *we* are as guilty of the error of presumption as Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar.

Lest I be assumed to be enjoying a bit of blasphemy, let me hasten to add that this God makes sense to me. I think him consistent with the enraged monarch ready to end the Hebrew experiment until Moses convinces Him otherwise—I almost said "cons" Him. "And the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (*Exodus*, 32:14). I find him maniacal . . . and godly, not some pale Transcendentalist deity, some divine, universal president of an ethical culture league.

In the prelude to *Fear and Trembling* Kierkegaard imagines a man, "not a learned exegete," who tries to imagine what it was like on Mount Moriah with Abraham and Isaac, and afterwards.

> And God tempted Abraham and said to him, Take Isaac, thine only son, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon the mountain which I will show thee.

Then four imagined versions follow. In the first, Abraham tells Isaac that it's he himself, not God, that demands the sacrifice; "After all it is better for him to believe that I am a monster, rather than that he should lose faith in Thee." In the second, Abraham can never forget the test required of him; "Isaac throve as before, but Abraham's eyes were darkened, and he knew joy no more." In the third, Abraham assumes it was his own desire and no godly command to kill, and "he prayed God to forgive him his sin, that he had been willing to offer Isaac, that the father had forgotten his duty toward the son." And, but, in the last,

> Abraham prepared everything for the sacrifice, calmly and quietly; but when he turned and drew the knife, Isaac saw that his left hand was clenched in despair, that a tremor passed through his body—but Abraham drew the knife.

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Then they returned again home, and Sarah hastened to meet them, but Isaac had lost his faith. No word of this had ever been spoken in the world, and Isaac never talked to anyone about what he had seen, and Abraham did not suspect that anyone had seen it.

Then Kierkegaard spends a book constructing his "own" version, in pursuit of the "teleological suspension of the ethical" and in celebration of the greatness and simplicity of Abraham, who "in a hundred and thirty years . . . didst not get further than to faith."

But I do not think the book ever quite recovers from the terrible visions of the prelude. And I find it tempting to wonder, when we next meet Isaac in *Genesis*, dwelling in the south country and going out at eventide to meditate in the fields, if he might not be pondering the mystery of which he'd been a part, weighing the awful test performed upon his father, and trying to come to terms with the awesomeness of divine whim.

NOW, I AM not a Jacob, a Job, or an Abraham or Isaac, as imagined by Kierkegaard or otherwise. I wrestle with no angels, hear no voice from the whirlwind, climb no Moriah. So when I hear or see "God" it's in a more mundane way—I'm observer of creation, part of it, subject to it, unheard railer at it. I do not have to conceive as some have of God *as* Nature—which strikes me as both a sophisticated construct and a cop-out from the rigors of faith—to think of him as designer and maker of it and responsible for it, whether a now-resting clockmaker or a constant tinkerer with his hand in things. In either case, I am by the lights of Aquinas a great sinner. What is is good because created by God, Aquinas says in the *Summa Against the Pagans*, and to despise any of Creation is to reflect sinfully upon the Divine. But I cannot attain to an infinite view of things, am stuck by my existence with a finite view and an immense dissatisfaction with what I see and experience. I seek an object of my anger, feel a need to despise *something* for botched nature.

Sometimes, in this mood, I can for sustained periods of time make like a manichee and separate plagues, earthquakes, and heart defects from "true" Creation and ascribe them to darker sources. But not for long. The same ice-storm that is so beautiful is a killer. "Did he who made the Lamb make thee?" William Blake asks of the Tiger, rhetorically. There is a great mystery here, wonderful in its immensity and depth; but I am not always patient of mysteries: other necessities intervene. One cannot always live life as if he were but an appreciative observer of it marveling at its complexities and ironies; "theology" has to give a place to an occasional lack of distance to credit how life *feels*.

Aquinas, Kierkegaard, Augustine, Barth, Pascal . . . in truth, I think about theologians less often than these notes imply. More likely I find my thoughts reflected in the works of poets, novelists, literary essayists.

And now, like an amateur divine, I'd like to choose a couple as my "texts."

William Bolitho's *Twelve Against the Gods* is a misleading title in this context. His concerns are not faith and unbelief, God and nature, not directly (his subtitle in fact is *The Story of Adventure*), so the passage I quote has the authority of disinterestedness. Bolitho is objecting to the romantic naturalistic aesthetics of one of his dozen adventurers, Isadora Duncan.

> But this Nature, this dear, beautiful mother . . . wants none of us. Nature is the night, the iceberg, the uninhabitable crags of mountains, the black gulfs of the ocean, in whose unveiled presence we are dumbstruck and tremble. This giant brooding power, who will not even look straight at us, like a captive tigress, when we dare to put ourselves in her presence . . . is not imitable! The suburban landscapes, the neatly growing trees, the gently curving rivers, with, naturally, a dear little cottage in the foreground, is not Nature, but artifice, the work of man. Even here, though we have painted a friendly smile on her mask, beneath the artifice (and it is thin), there is the same implacable. The nightingales, dear naturalist, do not sing for us or you. . . . All animals except the parasitical dog and cat we have debauched hate us; a sparrow that will not move aside for an elephant will hide itself before the most angelic child on earth can come within reach. One night, at the height of summer, walk in the most humanely artificial park, and clearing your brain of all the kindly cant of the lesser poets (for Shakespeare never misled you), perceive first in delight the huge rustling flood of life that is playing—in hope that you would not come; and then notice bitterly how at the first sound of your step everything living and dead closes, hushes, disappears. The trees themselves, it might seem, turn their backs on you . . . the human, the unwanted, the horror . . . the whole of Nature hopefully awaits the day we shall be extinct. It is wise and necessary to leave her awful symmetries to themselves; to build for ourselves a beauty and a world out of her ken.

NATURE . . . a strange home made for us, if, indeed, it was made for us. Perhaps an enormous edifice of indescribably wonderful and unplummetable symmetries, its architect a genius, but with rooms too small for habitation or so large as to make the occupant fear himself a dwarf. Still, perhaps we prefer home not to be too easy; we tend to shun efficiency apartments if we can, and if we choose them are usually apologetic about it.

I recently chose to spend a dozen months on a craggy mountain island, in a native stone house, in the most primitive village I could find, marveling at the rapid changes of flora, a new landscape every couple of weeks, and, two of those months, huddling in front of a fireplace listening to the gales and hoping there was no back-draught down the chimney to set the only warm room afire. So obviously I am not indiscriminately unappreciative of Creation. Even the gales I can enjoy; even an ice-storm I could; it's a matter, to a degree, of one's mood.

I even have my moments before Creation of a kind of swelling warmth, a befuddled awe as when listening to Beetho-

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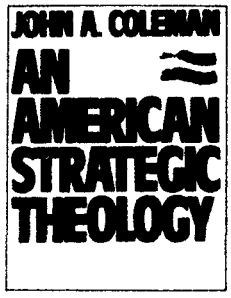

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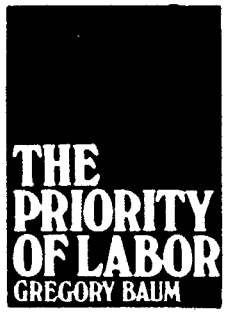

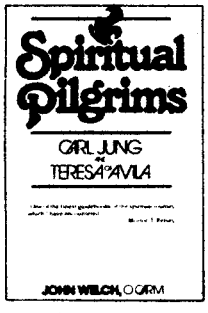

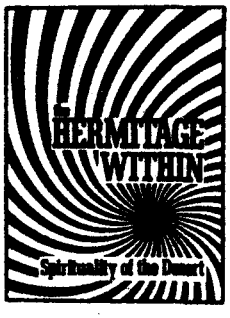

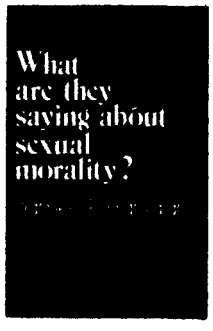

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ven or in a theater with Shakespeare. But, sad to say, I find all thoughts of "God" vanish when I try to think of Nature as the work of a "Poet"; *belief* is stirred only when events conspire to remind me of that "same implacable."

From Knut Hamsun's *Pan*, the narrator speaks:

> I once knew an old blind Lapp up in the hills. For fifty-eight years he had not seen a thing, and now he was seventy. He imagined he was seeing better as time went on; things were improving steadily, he thought. If all went well, he would be able to make out the sun in a year or two. His hair was still black, but his eyes were quite white. When we sat smoking together in his turf hut, he talked about all the things he had seen before he went blind. He was tough and healthy, without feeling, imperishable, and he kept his hope. When it was time for me to go, he stepped out with me and began to point in various directions. That is the south, he said, and that the north; now you go first in that direction, and when you have gone a little distance down you turn off that way. Quite right! I answered. Then the Lapp gave a little contented laugh and said: You see, forty or fifty years ago I didn't know that, so I must be seeing better now than I used to. Things are getting steadily better. Then he bent down and crept into the turf hut again, that everlasting turf hut, his home on earth. And he sat as before in front of the fire, full of hope that in a few years he would be able to see the sun.

I don't think one should read this as allegory; the sun is the *sun*. But there is something loosely religious about the passage, a poem of hope, resiliency, and courage. Without doubt, Creation is a wonderful thing to the Lapp, a gift; he has *earned* his love of it. And it would take a deficiency of compassion to make judgments upon his optimism. One can almost appreciate the random afflictions from Nature; they almost seem to have a place if they can demand and give muscle to such expansive courage. But it's in awe of the Lapp himself, not Nature, I stand. And I would prefer that my own brave young son had not had to store up visual memories, and to cultivate such courage, to make a singular adventure of his going blind.

It is perverse, I might be told, to color creation with your own pains—such an act of arrogance. Yes, I know. And there are pains so much vaster. Indeed; I knew a man from Sobibor. But I'll not allow to Hitler the retroactive power to make all pains acceptable because less than what he wrought. *He'll* be no healer to me. —Or, *be reasonable*, I might be told; why *should* you expect a world free of horrors. Well, I don't expect that; but I'm enraged that I *can't*, that death, disease, destruction, decay are so insatiable that such expectation is impotent childishness. Anger is the enemy of reason—and the stronger foe. —Or, tone it down, another might say; that is, "secularize" it: unjust brutality (No, one doesn't have to call it "just," the understanding voice sympathizes) is part of the random symmetry of the way the universe works, without intelligent Author. But, once more, I cannot tone it down—my secular inclinations fail me as often as my belief. Pain, unwelcome and persistent, never does.

SO FULL of mysteries, the contemplation of Faith. We often do it a bald disservice, assume it merely an act we take when reason fails, an act not motivated by facts and taken in the absence of them. James remarks that, to the contrary, faith can *create* facts: a dozen people can be victimized by two gangsters because no one of the dozen believes that if he stands up anyone else will; had each the faith that all would stand up when he did, then all would, and faith would have created the fact of resistance. So it's an immense thing I speak of, faith, not just an archaic notion in a rationalist age. But on the other hand, faith in one's visible fellows is a somewhat different matter from Faith in a Father one's not seen save in his confusing manifestations, some of them afflictive.

At any rate—I reach again for the urbane distance—it's a curious thing to find a long-sustaining Unbelief become unsustaining—without my fully losing it—and to find a Faith lost in the hinteryears asserting itself—without my fully possessing it—and that not because of love and acceptance but because of hatred and anger.

I might be able to appreciate the paradox, were I the one truly paying for it; I might even be able to shudder in wonder if I'm one of those upon whom He works mysteriously performing His wonders. But, frankly, I'd think *that* perverse and arrogant of me—both because I do not consider myself the noble person worthier of salvation than most I once would have liked to be thought, and because I'm *not* the only, or even the major, one to pay the cost.

Perhaps *were* I really paying, were I Hamsun's old blind Lapp, then maybe the direct experience of pain and necessity of coping, instead of impotent compassion, would work some ironic alchemy, so that I'd feel a love of Creation in all its manifold and find myself too busy to despise. But, in that case, I confess I'm weak, and hope that He is not listening.

Recordings

HOW TO LISTEN

THE WORLD OF CLASSICAL RECORDS

IT TAKES no great perspicacity to observe that a high percentage of new classical albums preserve performances of familiar pieces that already have ten, twenty, thirty or more recorded versions to their credit.

Who benefits from this multiplicity? Surely not the novice, who, unable to judge the finer points of either performance or sound, should feel perfectly satisfied with any product that adequately transmits the power of the music per se. Rather, the principal interest in, say, Jochum's current re-recordings of the Bruckner symphonies focuses among seasoned record collectors eager to discover what fresh insights Jochum or his engineers may offer. But though Jochum's latest thoughts on Bruckner may indeed be worth documenting, far too often the

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most recent recording of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, or Schumann's First, or the *1812 Overture*, or whatever, captures music-making that, while hardly poor or perfunctory, supplies nothing substantive not already better accomplished on record. This raises some questions.

Why do artists continue to record the same pieces when there is so much music of great merit awaiting a first recording, or first decent one? And why do music lovers avariciously acquire multiple versions of a given work? My speculations follow.

A century of recording has generated a new breed of listener and a new way of listening. Such a listener concentrates on sound, performance, and performer. Such a listener buys Solti's latest rendition of Mahler's Second Symphony intent on discerning how it differs from the "classic" Walter or Klemperer versions. Or to hear how the new digital Solti Mahler stacks up to his 1966 analog recording of the work on the same label (London). Or to contrast the close-up perspective of one recording with the balcony view of another. Such a listener even zeroes in on tiny specific passages: a glissando here, an inner voice there. Of course by the time all these comparisons have been made there isn't much energy remaining to pay attention—*really* pay attention—to the music itself.

Now I'm not about to urge a ban upon such comparisons. They are both fascinating and pleasurable, and after all, I'm paid to do precisely those things. I even suspect that there are good *musical* reasons for all this. We (and who among us has not listened in this way) want the recording engineer or the conductor to somehow enrich our understanding of a score, to show us something we hadn't noticed before. Hence our incessant quest for the "definitive interpretation"—two words which, when you stop to think about them, are antithetical.

It makes me worry about our priorities. Why shouldn't we have noticed that inner bassoon line ourselves (or was it even intended to be noticed)? Why should we be so dependent on the performer? Everything is so easy today, available at the mere flick of a switch. No longer is it necessary to learn a work by painstakingly reading through it at the piano. No longer is it even necessary to read music. We simply play a record as many times as we wish. And if the music has not been recorded? Well, that's one piece we won't get to know.

Let's not fool ourselves into thinking that we "know" a piece simply because we have heard it a hundred times. There is something to be said for the plunker at the keyboard and for even the most unaccomplished amateur musician who exerts the effort to make music first hand. There is something to be said for the armchair listener who attentively follows a record or radio broadcast score in hand.

It disturbs me that some extremely perceptive listeners of my acquaintance cannot even read music, and that despite their great love for music are unwilling to take the time to learn. It disturbs me because I know that a reasonably intelligent and diligent individual can learn to follow a score within a month and can learn the basics of music theory in a semester course. It disturbs me because I know that while musical literacy is not requirement or guarantee of sensitive listening, no musical illiterate can possibly understand the finer shades of a composer's accomplishment.

Don't let anyone persuade you that by learning to read music, by coming to terms with how a piece is put together, that somehow you will lose magical qualities that drew you to the music in the first place. Nonsense. Is a book less enjoyable because you read it rather than have someone read it to you? The analogy is not entirely apt. For just as a Shakespeare play comes to full life only through a vital enactment, so a complex musical score conveys its full measure only when a master vividly translates the printed notes into physical sound.

And performing musicians face plenty of problems of their own. Their agents demand that they play the tried-and-true crowd-pleasers, and their teachers tacitly comply by largely training them in that limited repertory. Yet when these musicians finally get on stage critics complain that their performance cannot hold a candle to that of Mr. X on a long out-of-print 1937 disc. It's the cult of invidious comparison: sure Aaron could hit, but I saw Babe Ruth in his prime, and let me tell you. . . .

No one—not the musicians, not the critics, not the listeners, inevitably not the record companies—is satisfied. Why? Bluntly, far too many musicians and record executives are afraid to take risks, to trust their own artistic instincts. Teresa Stratas's recent album of "unknown" Kurt Weill songs has proved a tremendous success for Nonesuch because it offers an irresistible combination of fascinating and unfamiliar music,

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excitingly recreated. It is making money, so naturally other companies wish to jump on the Weill bandwagon with lucrative products of their own. But these companies lacked the foresight or guts to have commissioned the original and lack the imagination to come up with a viable alternative. These companies will be surprised when their insipid imitations fail to find a market.

Forget those record companies and agents, all in fact whose interest in music is as business, not art. The musicians themselves, the critics, the concert and record audience are, I think, primarily interested in music as communication. True communication implies exchange; it cannot satisfactorily be one-sided. Perceptive listening requires informed listeners. Not many of us are going to take the trouble to sit at a piano and pore over difficult scores. But we may as well realize that if we genuinely want to learn about music, the responsibility rests not with performers or recording engineers, but with ourselves.

DERRICK HENRY

Screen

WRITERS WRONGED

NOVELIST AND PLAYWRIGHT ON FILM

I THINK I take personal offense at the way writers are depicted in movies. Even though the writer is not as a rule some lowly critic, but a novelist like Garp (Robin Williams) in *The World According to Garp*, or a successful playwright like Ivan Trevelyan (Al Pacino) in *Author! Author!*, I've decided that such characters are an insult to the whole profession. In Garp's case the insult is of course added to injury—the one done to the John Irving novel on which the movie is based. Not that the novel is a great modern classic. It's just a bestseller. But at least it's both by and about a credible writer. It shows some inventiveness with plots, characters, and occasionally even words. Garp is an original. He embodies Irving's aspirations as a writer. His personality is Irving's style. His adventures are a surrogate for Irving's struggle with language.

If you couldn't get something of the uniqueness of a writer's experience into a story about him, what would be the point in telling it? What else does a writer have to offer as a hero? Nothing, as both *Author! Author!* and the movie version of Irving's novel demonstrate.

One of the things that Garp has in common with Irving is a passion for wrestling. Wrestlers are as maniacal as writers. They train compulsively in order to be able to stretch that extra inch to get better leverage, in order to develop that extra ounce of strength or half second of speed. Irving's writing is a lot like that. He creates a basic situation and then concentrates on extending it, flipping it in unexpected directions where he can get a better grip on it, stretching the elaborations as far as he can without throwing off his timing or losing his balance. The result is writing that has the straining, awkward grace of a wrestling match.

Irving's ability to surprise and amuse us, the zaniness that makes his prose entertaining, is what the movie lacks. Steven Tesich's script eliminates the convolutions of the novel's plot—for instance, the whole Austrian junket to the *pension* whose guests include a bicycling bear—and in the scenes that do remain, director George Roy Hill has done nothing to compensate for the loss. The effect is to turn *Garp* into a kind of period sit-com. It becomes a tediously episodic story set in a big suburban house, the type in which Ozzie and Harriet lived. Like Ozzie, Garp is a man with no visible profession. He's just a benign father figure. He is at most a mild eccentric, a word duffer of the sort to which Hollywood has always reduced writers on the screen.

At least *Garp* is a movie that once had a real writer connected with it. *Author! Author!*, having been done from an original screenplay by Israel Horovitz, doesn't even have that. This is the story of a struggling playwright who is hoping his new work will be a hit on Broadway, and is living in a million-dollar townhouse in the meantime. In the second scene his wife Gloria (Tuesday Weld) shows herself to be a loving, understanding woman with a great sense of humor. She organizes her half dozen kids by former marriages into a swell surprise party for Ivan's birthday. A scene or so later, she shows herself to be a selfish, heartless bitch. She walks out on Ivan and deserts her kids. The advantage this unaccountable twist gives Horovitz and director Arthur Hiller is that it allows them to drag everything in their movie down to the level of domestic farce.

Once Ivan has the kids to cope with, it's easy to make his relationships with all other characters into similar misadventures. The star of his play (Dyan Cannon), his producer (Alan King) and his director (Bob Dishy) become an extended family. The star even moves in with him for a while, just to make sure the equation of the literary life and family life isn't lost on us. Such obviousness carries over into the movie's dialogue as well. One evening the director and producer arrive at Ivan's townhouse to propose changes in the second act. He is in the midst of a family crisis, as usual, but they insist he listen to their suggestions anyway. "I just wanna bounce this off you," "Lemme just bounce this off you," they keep repeating. Finally Ivan grabs the manuscript from their hands and, announcing that he will now "bounce" it off them, throws the pages in their faces. I guess Hiller and Horovitz were afraid we wouldn't get the joke unless that phrase were repeated ten times first. Can we learn anything about writers from people who put dialogue like this in their movie?

So I come back to my original question. Why are these two movies about writers? What's the point, since neither movie has any interest in its subject *as* a writer? In part the answer is that writers provide a license for foolishness. They're perfect subjects for comedy because everyone knows that a writer is a kind of nincompoop, someone with laughable solutions to life's little problems. To this traditional anti-intellectualism,

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however, these two movies add a more contemporary touch. It's a curious coincidence that two comedies about writers should appear in a single season, and more curious still that both should cast their heroes in the conventional woman's role as homemakers. On the one hand, a writer is a buffoon; but on the other hand, he is also a figure of male sufficiency, a character who unites masculinity with the feminine principle of creativity. While inviting you to laugh at their writer-heroes, both movies invite you to laugh out the other side of your face at the same time. The comedy has undertones that are, if not misogynist, at least anti-feminist.

All that remains of Irving's novel, once the movie has removed other complications, is the story of a man bedeviled by women. Garp is a loyal son whose dotty mother (Glenn Close) runs a commune for self-mutilating radicals in the women's movement. He is a wonderful homemaker—he crows about how much he loves raising kids and keeping house—with a wife (Mary Beth Hurt) whose infidelity results in an accident that costs one of their sons his life. He is a famous writer whose grief at his mother's death is scorned by other feminists, and who is himself killed by an evil prude who is one of his mother's misguided disciples. The only member of his mother's group who gets really sympathetic treatment is the trans-sexual, Roberta, a former pro football star played by actor John Lithgow in drag. But then Roberta is just a variation on Garp's own self-sufficiency as a man.

Author! Author! affirms manhood in similar terms. In the last scene the party with which the film began is repeated, except that this time Gloria, who was the impetus behind the original *fête*, is not present. Her presence is no longer necessary to either Ivan or her own kids. They can get along without her, as this celebration in honor of the success of Ivan's new play proves. Like *Garp, Author! Author!* shows us how feasible—indeed, how desirable—a world of men without women might be.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.

THE SANCTITY OF A LIBERAL INTELLECTUAL

Canonizing the *real* Newman

EDWARD E. KELLY

THE CAUSE for Cardinal Newman's canonization has been given new life: bishops are more committed and energetic now in England and new commissions are busy preparing the Cause. There is also a more outspokenly sympathetic pope in Rome. The scene for effective action is further set with the publication of almost all of Newman's letters and other writings, especially from his Catholic period. They are surely the most important source for evaluating the great nineteenth-century Englishman's holiness.

Even with these new grounds for hope, admirers of Newman might still be doubtful about the success of the Cause. After all, the same kinds of Catholics who opposed him in the past still have influential positions in the church. The same objections thrown against Newman's sanctity even by fair-minded persons twenty-five years ago have some plausibility today. And those who strongly support the Cause can have reasonable fears that it will not proceed in the best way. The *real* Newman might not be the person canonized. As a student of Newman for thirty years, I have long desired his formal recognition as a saint. But I have never liked the sanitized figure free of all imperfections and full of all truth that certain Newmanians, mainly European, have striven to create. I want the Newman of his daily letters, journals, and controversies to be honored, even if this means that he will not be attractive to every Christian today or tomorrow.

What is needed today, when so many intellectuals cannot find a place in the church, is official affirmation of the sanctity of a liberal intellectual and academic, for a change. Newman was certainly such a man, at least in his nineteenth-century setting. Canonization would mean that his special intellectual way of life could be viewed as a sign of God in the world, as a modern reflection of the redemptive mission of Jesus Christ for intellectuals. Perhaps, then, directors of the many Newman Centers at American universities might have an incentive to learn more of the cultural, academic, and religious significance of the extraordinary man whose name they adopt.

Far too little honor has been given to men like Newman, no doubt, because of the general anti-intellectual and anti-liberal nature of modern Catholicism. Newman himself complained that Rome neglected or even rejected men like himself; it often alienated and gave scandal to educated people. It was the Roman orientation of the Irish bishops, he claimed, that made them unappreciative of the proper intellectual goals of the Catholic University he founded for them. The Roman intellectual confusion that produced the Syllabus of Errors in 1864 made the position of people like himself in England "as difficult as possible."

Newman's lifelong holiness can readily be described in traditional terms: an acute sense of the presence of God which generated a continuous life of prayer and a connatural subordination of worldly values; an unwavering dedication, at all costs, to divine truth and to God's special calling to himself; and an exceptionally lively conscience. Newman worked at being holy from age fifteen onwards. A Calvinistic-type drive to be one of the Elect and to show this by conscientious action characterizes both his Protestant and Catholic years. He wanted to be like his own special saint-heroes—St. Paul, St. Athanasius, St. Philip Neri. He kept records (copied let-

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ters, memoranda, and autobiographical writings) of the honesty of his life and of his adherence to God's truth.

This desire to leave a kind of proof of his rectitude might seem excessive; his need to defend *his* behavior in a memorandum about F. W. Faber's death appears immoderate and perhaps reveals a deeper sense of guilt. But even in all of this, Newman's preoccupation with conscience and perfection comes through. His greatest sorrows were for his failures; he was often haunted by a sense of accomplishing little in the very areas of life to which he felt God was calling him and giving him special talents. Newman's sufferings, especially those caused by higher authorities, have often been called *heroic*.

AYE, THERE'S the rub! This is where obstacles to Newman's Cause have risen in the past. Newman suffered because of bishops and Rome itself, and he criticized and complained of them. So, to canonize Newman would be equivalent to striking at the church and its authority.

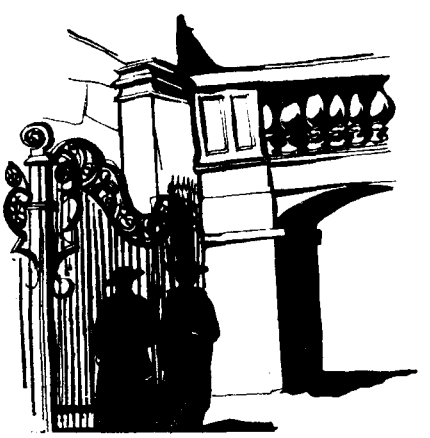
Newman certainly did criticize and complain of Wiseman, Cullen, Manning, Barnabo, and Ullathorne. Once he remarked to a correspondent that St. Basil made similar complaints, and he was a saint. I would hope that the promoters of the Cause will not deny, ignore, explain away, or take a merely defensive attitude toward this issue. Let them positively illustrate (at the risk of encouraging thousands of Küngs) how these criticisms were Newman's way of fulfilling his religious calling and were made for the good of the church. It is not sufficient, however, to point out that Newman was more intelligent than the bishops, because he still could have been motivated by pride, self-will, or resentment. Sometimes he did appear to be proud and unbending; he was not sinless.

Probably the second most troublesome area of Newman's character is his more-than-ordinary sensitivity. Stephen Dessain and other misguided Newman lovers have strictly denied this so-called injurious allegation. The evidence for it, however, is overwhelming: his family, friends, enemies, and Newman himself have noticed his sensitive nature, and every volume of his letters reveals it. At last, Msgr. Anthony Stark, the vice-postulator for Newman's Cause has admitted it but claims that "only a saint could have effected the undoubted good he did despite such a sensitive disposition!" This analysis is on the whole too negative and yet not negative enough, if it is true.

Newman's sensitivity can be viewed in a positive way: his genius, his apostolic effectiveness, and his vibrant religious conscientiousness are intricately connected with and supported by it. He achieved great things, not despite, but *because* of his sensitivity. The negative side is that sometimes his sensitivity looks very much like simple touchiness and hurt pride. So, the more damaging question must be asked: was this sensitivity often a manifestation of a deeper disorder—pride, vanity, or self-will?

St. Augustine confessed such faults, and he was canonized. To press Msgr. Stark further: did Newman's sensitivity diminish his productivity? The traditional defense that bishops and Rome kept him from doing more is only partly true. He himself was finally responsible for his life and for his isolation. There is some sense in which Newman found satisfaction in his Athanasian-like exile in Birmingham.

Some contemporaries of Newman and later writers have noted a feminine dimension to his personality, and it has been suggested that his basic sexual *orientation* was homosexual. Some Newman admirers are painfully disturbed by such considerations; one misguided Englishman has attempted to deny them by insisting that Newman was thoroughly masculine because he was a good walker, a swimmer and a horse-rider! When a more enlightened English theologian asked me about this possible homosexual orientation and I answered "quite likely," he remarked that if this were admitted (or even proclaimed), Newman could be an inspiration and example for many other homosexually oriented people today. He is right.



THE IMPORTANT POINT is to evaluate how Newman coped with and made use of the personality and sexuality given him by God. His letters and those of his correspondents make it clear that both men and women found him lovable and were drawn to God through his complex personality. His holiness was necessarily proportioned to his whole person and existential situation, to every last cell of his particular body and every action of his unique psyche. The more that is known and admitted, the more real will be the Newman canonized.

My hope, also, is that in the process of canonization Newman's thought will be neither ruined nor made definitive. George Tyrrell rightly feared that if Newman were canonized in the early twentieth century his living spirit would be lost and his ideas petrified. Baron von Hügel worried that Newman's emphasis on authority could be dangerous in a church that was threatened by modern thought. The long enslavement to the authority of St. Augustine and St. Thomas should not be forgotten. Like those great thinkers, Newman introduced some valuable new views on Christianity, but he did not say the last word on every topic. In fact, it was his very point that he was often saying only the first word and advancing only the beginning of a theory on matters like doctrinal development. The church has already moved a good distance beyond even his progressive ideas on faith, infallibility, and the role of the laity. Avery Dulles has pointed out that Newman's ecclesiology is no longer very useful. And even some of his most moving sermons are infused with a form of supernaturalism and eschatology that is not much in mode today.

But Newman's thought is not the object of canonization; his life is, and it was

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not oriented towards protests against the evils of society or war (as many today might wish) but towards intellectual achievements, especially in support of Christianity and Catholicism. He himself protested that education was his work, from first to last. Let him be made a Doctor of the Church, and if he is realistically presented he can be a model for others to follow. Lawrence Cunningham has well contrasted this aspect of Newman's sanctity to the "miracles" of Padre Pio, who is the traditional canonizable type: who can imitate his stigmata and power of bilocation?

Finally, it would be good to have an end to talk about miracles and "heroic" sanctity. There are too many problems and assumptions with both of these "requirements." Quite a new meaning would have to be given to the word *heroic* in order to describe the real Newman. And the clearest "miracle" has already taken place: many people during Newman's lifetime and in the ninety-two years since his death have been led to God and into the Catholic church through knowing him in his ordinary life and through reading his books. Newman has been pronounced holy, a veritable saint, by people from all walks of life, by the non-educated as well as the educated. Let the *vox populi* be heard.

Books: HANNAH ARENDT AS THINKER

HANNAH ARENDT: FOR LOVE OF THE WORLD

Elisabeth Young-Bruehl

Yale, $25, 563 pp.

Alasdair MacIntyre

THAT Hannah Arendt was a remarkable person is not in doubt. The names of her friends are enough to settle the matter. Anyone who could engage the affections and loyalties of Randall Jarrell, Mary McCarthy and W. H. Auden perhaps deserves a biography on that count alone. But Hannah Arendt's claims in the public world were made as a theorist; and it was and is as a theorist that she has been acclaimed. At the very beginning of this biography Elisabeth Young-Bruehl quotes from the reviews of *The Origins of Totalitarianism*: "it is a masterpiece," "she is comparable to Marx." These were ludicrous judgments and it is an unkindness to remember them.

Hannah Arendt's published work is at its best deeply flawed. It is one of the weaknesses of this biography that although a variety of laudatory and hostile opinions on Hannah Arendt's books are quoted, all too little is said about the contents of the books themselves and thus the opinions quoted hang in the air, for the most part insufficiently connected with that about which they are opinions. For those seriously interested in Hannah Arendt as a thinker Margaret Canovan's excellent *The Political Thought of Hannah Arendt* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1974) will provide what is missing from Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's biography. Margaret Canovan's stance is that of a critical, but sympathetic expositor; Elisabeth Young-Bruehl's is that of an enthusiastic devotee.

The devotion has some admirable results. Industry and insight have combined to produce accounts of the Jewish milieu of Hannah Arendt's Koenigsberg childhood, of the university circles in which she moved in the nineteen-twenties and of her life as an exile from the time she left Germany until her arrival in New York in 1941, which are remarkable contributions to the social history of Hannah Arendt's time. The writing is vivid, the attention to detail meticulous, the ability to tell a good story well outstanding. But the portrait which gradually emerges and which dominates the latter part of the book does not perhaps give quite the impression that the author intended.

Hannah Arendt drew a fundamental contrast between the activity of thinking which puts us in touch with the reality of ourselves and others ("What I propose . . . is nothing more than to think what we are doing") and the kind of enquiry which she took to be characteristic of science and of at least some kinds of philosophy, where there is an attempt by means of logic and evidence to arrive at truth. These latter kind of enquiries, so Hannah Arendt asserted, enforce agreement upon those who participate in them; and this type of enforced agreement endangers freedom and those human relationships such as friendship for which freedom is essential. She was thus professedly the enemy of a certain kind of general scientific and philosophical theorizing. The thinking which she commands in its place takes diversity of opinion among free people as ineliminable and yet by freeing us from preconceptions it puts us in touch with the nature of our own actions.

There is more than one level at which this kind of contention needs to be put to the question. The attitude toward logic that is at the heart of it is matched in its misunderstanding only by the erroneous view taken of natural science. But what matters most is not perhaps the particular intellectual mistakes embodied in it, but the fact that what Hannah Arendt constructed was itself an unacknowledged general theory and one which interposed

Towards the end of the summer of 1940 . . . the reading of Simenon's romans policiers *was not just a diversion. His insight into the structures and methods of the French police proved very helpful . . . none of the friends who heeded her warning in October 1940 against complying with the French police order requiring all Jews to register with the nearest préfet was ungrateful to Simenon for stimulating her distrust of police.*

—Elisabeth Young-Bruehl
Hannah Arendt

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itself systematically, so that far from confronting the facts themselves what she saw was all too often what her theory prescribed that she should see. She was indeed a self-indulged victim of the very form of thought which she ostensibly disowned.

So although she emphasized the importance of truthfulness about the particular concrete fact, it is often the irrelevant or marginal fact which her own theory selects for its central focus. It is instructive, for example, to read side by side *The Origins of Totalitarianism* and the writings of a modern historian of Nazi Germany such as K. D. Bracher. Arendt's pretentious collage simply collapses into insignificance. But these failures in her principles of selection are outstripped by those due to the blindness to certain phenomena which her oversimple theory of the relation of knowing to doing produced.

"The judges did not believe him," she wrote of Eichmann, "because they were too good, and perhaps also too conscious of the very foundations of their profession, to admit that an 'average,' 'normal,' person, neither feebleminded nor indoctrinated nor cynical, could be perfectly incapable of telling right from wrong." I do not doubt that Eichmann's judges took a fairly simple view of these matters; the effective functioning of any system of justice requires a certain lack of subtlety. But Hannah Arendt's contrary view was far more inadequate. It could only have been sustained, if at all, by a cogent systematic analysis of the nature of moral deception and self-deception. For it is clear that we *can* collaborate in deceiving ourselves about what we are doing and that those who do so in a very profound way may well know precisely what they are doing and why it is wrong, even although they deny it to themselves as well as to others. This is the possibility that Hannah Arendt owed it to the readers of *Eichmann in Jerusalem* to investigate.

Perhaps however the chief interest of Hannah Arendt's life arises not from the successes or failures of her arguments but rather from the largely unique role that she played in American intellectual life. In a period of great and appalling events there was a large and intelligent public which hungered for understanding, and understanding which the professionalized academic theorists of politics and society did all too little to supply. Hannah Arendt seemed to give what they withheld. What Elisabeth Young-Bruehl has supplied is a biography full of material for the future sociologist of culture rather than for the historian of ideas.

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The Christian as radical fool

FOLLOWING CHRIST IN A CONSUMER SOCIETY
THE SPIRITUALITY OF CULTURAL RESISTANCE

John Francis Kavanaugh
Orbis, $6.95, 167 pp.

Michael Zeik

A COUSIN of mine recently took her teenage daughter to the doctor. After a thorough examination, the doctor came out and said to her, "Your daughter's sore throat will be o.k., but I found something else more serious." He sounded ominous. The mother braced herself for the dreaded six-letter word. When it came, it had, indeed, six letters — but the word was not cancer. The doctor said, "Your daughter is still a virgin!"

The *New York Times*, one of the world's papers-of-record, is less blatant. In a recent editorial on the problem of rising illegitimacy, the *Times* did not condemn virginity as malignant; it merely dismissed it as "quaint."

All of this is by way of a little background for John Kavanaugh's claim in this excellent, hard-hitting book, that anyone trying to live a Christian life today probably feels (and *should* feel) like a freak, like a shipwrecked Martian! For it is becoming more and more the case that, by the standards of modern society, Christianity is at least deviant, and potentially subversive.

Even marriage, as a permanent relationship, is rapidly become "countercultural." (More "deviant," really, than hip, communal sex which is as manipulative in its own way as the Madison Avenue establishment against which it rebels.) For in a society which considers life-commitment impossible — or, if possible, undesirable — and which looks upon sacrifice and self-fulfillment as mutually exclusive, anyone entering into an enduring personal covenant is a *radical*. A radical fool.

But this is not, exclusively, a book about marriage and sexuality. It is a state-of-the-art book about idolatry — the insidious tyranny of it; and how, socially and individually, we might chop our way free.

"Their idols are silver and gold," wrote the Psalmist. "They have mouths that cannot speak, eyes that cannot see, ears that cannot hear . . . Their makers grow to be like them," Psalm 115 concludes, "and so do all who trust in them." But, the statues of Zeus and Apollo now securely consigned to our museums, what is the nature of *twentieth century* idolatry?

Kavanaugh points out that the same Yahweh who forbids us to make any graven image of the Godhead, gave us one himself. Adam! the human race. Male and female, he created them in God's image. And in 1982, two great value systems compete for our total allegiance. These are, in the author's terms: the "Commodity Form," and the

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"Personal Form." While the latter proclaims the uniqueness, the irreplaceable value of the person (created in God's image), the former finds that person valuable only to the extent that he or she is "successful," productive, marketable. (And we so judge even ourselves, when we are in a nasty mood.)

The Personal Form stresses interiority, self-awareness, understanding and trust; the Commodity Form emphasizes external observation and description, measurement, and control. The Personal Form asks "Why"; the Commodity Form questions "How." The first encourages covenant; the second, noncommitment. Where the former would suggest sharing and forgiveness; the latter affirms competition and retaliation. Etc. You get the picture.

But what you may or may not have guessed is how invaluable the author finds Marx for a Christian critique of idolatry and dehumanization. Indeed, Kavanaugh feels that the atheistic Marxist analysis of society may prove as useful to modern Christian thinkers, as the pagan Aristotelian metaphysics once proved to Thomas Aquinas. Marx offers Christians what the writer calls a "*Totalizing* Critique." Marx, he says,

> relentlessly pointed out that the most philosophical and economic worldviews contained a hidden premise which itself had to be subjected to questioning and criticism: the premise that men and women had no right to their own labor, that they were subservient to the market, that they were somehow slaves to their own products.

So, the author maintains, Marxists and Christians have something to learn from each other. The Marxist (not Soviet!) "passion for equality and human dignity," as well as his "commitment to a change in unjust social orders," frequently shames the bland churchy thing into which Christianity so easily devolves. And yet, he adds, the class-analysis and rigid ideological structure of Marxism fosters violence and a metaphysics of fear. "At the center of Marxism is a gaping hole. It is the absence of spirit."

Thus it is the *totality* of Marx's critique that fascinates Kavanaugh. He wants contemporary Christians to have a vivid realization of the *interconnectedness* of culture, economy, and spirituality.

Does, for example, chastity (broadly defined as the integration of one's sexuality with one's whole personhood and life-commitment) have any *economic* reverberations? (Look at the pitch of

> *Could it be that there are economic conditions that foster the breaking of the ten commandments? Does a given economic or social system inhibit personal commitment, prayer, or the sharing of our goods? Is there a cultural bias against the living of lifelong vows? Does chastity have a political impact? Is marital fidelity a social force for justice? In answering such questions, we might more fully realize that there is nothing in the realm of the social, the political, or the economic which does not influence or is not influenced by the realm of the spirit.*
>
> —John Francis Kavanaugh
> *Following Christ in a Consumer Society*

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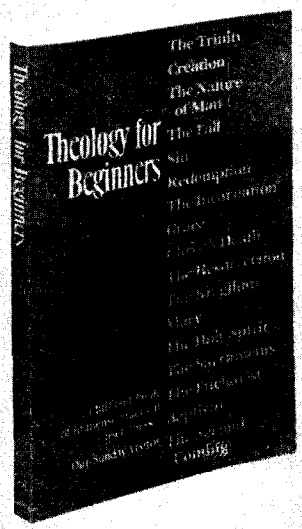

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modern advertising.) There is probably *nothing* in the so-called secular realm which does not influence (or is not influenced by) the realm of the spirit.

Sound far-fetched? Well, look at it this way. If you are a married person with children, who enjoys playing and talking to them; if you enjoy nature, and walking outdoors as well; if you get along well with your wife or husband, and enjoy conversing, and going to bed; if you like to get together with your friends for conversation; and if you also enjoy intervals of quiet and solitude, periods for reflection and prayer: of what *use* are you to the gross national product? "You haven't spent a nickel yet!"

If, on the other hand, we are unsure of ourselves and our relationships, find no contentment in our family or sex life, if we cannot stand being alone or even conversing quietly with friends; we are very likely to go out and *buy* something! Holes are for filling. Alienation and discontent are good for business; and if you feel no hole in your life, fear not, Madison Avenue will dig one!

This excellent book (which I only minimally describe in the space allotted) hit me with the force of an intensive three-day retreat. Its author is as much poet as priest, as much sociologist as theologian. I know that economists often make economy "mystical"; but not in the same way as does Kavanaugh. I congratulate Orbis for bringing out still another fine book. If Christianity has a future, and I believe it has, it will surely be as a "counter-culture." Only to that, I think, will our youth respond.

Who gets what?

WHAT'S FAIR?
AMERICAN BELIEFS ABOUT DISTRIBUTIVE JUSTICE

Jennifer Hochschild
Harvard University Press, $22.50, 345 pp.

John Langan

LIFE, we have it on the authority of Presidents Kennedy and Carter and numerous pundits, is not fair. In the United States, at the present time, it seems to be getting less fair, as the federal government abandons programs aimed at lifting up the disadvantaged and as the country acquiesces in tax changes and contract renegotiations which will lift the burden of taxes from the backs of the rich and restrain the wage gains of workers. The questions that this book explores are of pressing current interest, even though the book starts out with an examination of that hardy perennial, the question why there is no socialism in the United States.

Jennifer Hochschild, a young scholar from Yale who is now teaching at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, recognizes that the question that provides the title of her book troubles both truck drivers and coupon clippers and provokes answers that vary in emotional intensity and intellectual sophistication. The particular route she has taken in presenting the diversity of our beliefs and attitudes about distributive justice is to report a series of extended interviews with twenty-eight poor and wealthy residents of the New Haven area. Her objective is not to develop a sample for determining national opinion on various controversial public policies but to convey a sense of the complexity (often, indeed, the incoherence) of the beliefs of individuals about justice and of the ambiguity of their feelings. This is something that she does very well, largely because of her ability to respond sympathetically to people of various backgrounds. All of her respondents were white; they were divided equally by sex. All the wealthy were Jewish or WASP; none of the poor was Jewish. This may tell us more about the New Haven area than it does about the United States at large, and it indicates the danger in using Hochschild's people as a representative sample.

The value of her work is that she extends a bridge between the reflections of ordinary people on matters of justice and the large themes of political philosophy and public policy debate. The major con-

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clusion that she draws from her interviews is that people's distributive judgments depend more on the domain of life that is being considered and much less on class position or general ideology. Thus, people are egalitarian in their judgments about the socializing domain, which includes such sensitive topics as racial, ethnic, and religious discrimination and relations between the sexes. They are also egalitarian about the political domain, especially on questions of right and authority. But in the economic domain, their judgments endorse differential treatment which rewards greater productivity and investment and which accepts the superior status of the rich as appropriate, even if not strictly merited. The two departures from this pattern are in the direction of consistent equality or consistent differentiation across domains. Hochschild actually gives more prominence to the different feelings of bitterness and satisfaction that the rich and the poor have about the way things work out in the various domains. She does warn us not to dismiss the variation across domains as evidence of inconsistency or ignorance.

She is modest and cautious in the political conclusions she draws from her rich and often poignant materials. She insists both that there is little normative support for downward redistribution and that Americans have strong egalitarian tendencies which lead them to support government programs aimed at helping the deserving poor and at creating jobs and which cause them to resent low taxes for the rich. Anyone who saw this manuscript in 1980 should not have been surprised either by President Reagan's budgetary triumphs or by the subsequent wave of resentment and misgiving. It would take a brave theorist to hold that only what is fair will work; but it is reassuring to find cases where what isn't fair doesn't work either.

REVIEWERS

ALASDAIR MacINTYRE *is Henry R. Luce professor in the department of philosophy at Wellesley College. He is the author of several books, including* Against the Self-Images of the Age, *and, most recently,* After Virtue *(University of Notre Dame Press).*

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Literature and the Book

THE GREAT CODE

THE BIBLE AND LITERATURE

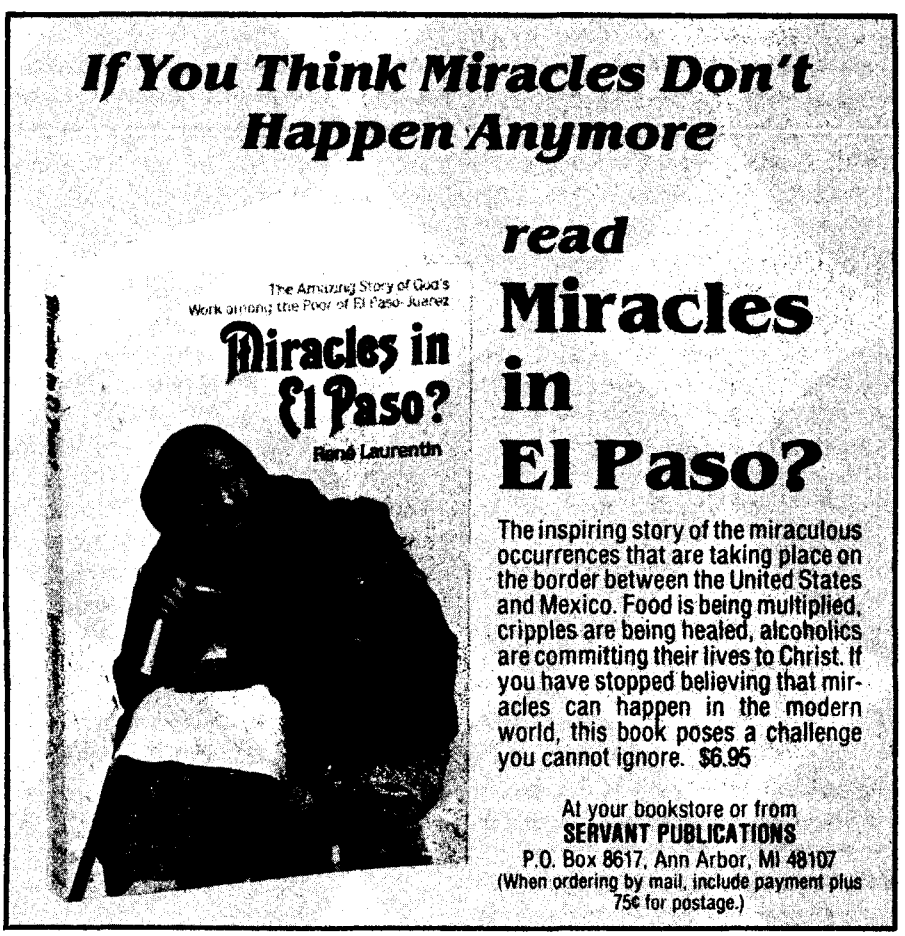
Northrop Frye

Harcourt Brace & Jovanovich, $14.95, 261 pp.

John Dominic Crossan

THE CRITICAL study of the Christian Bible has operated since its inception within a predominately historical paradigm. Source criticism emphasized the genetic relationship within and between texts. Form criticism looked for the sociological setting from which such forms derived. Redaction criticism presumed the use of sources and focused on how the final writer used those given materials. It is interesting that the data so brilliantly illuminated by those methods *could* have been seen just as easily in terms of process as of product. That whole vast research *can* be, and has been, used to isolate and venerate either the original or the final text, but it *can* also be used to contemplate the total hermeneutical process from original to final text, giving no ultimate honor to either product but to the developmental process itself. What remains thereafter as normative or at least provocative is a continuing and contemporary process rather than any text, original, intermediate, or final, as fixed and dated products. Such could be but is not yet how biblical study is taken.

There are, instead, two major reactions to the exclusivity of historical in-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terests in biblical studies. One comes from within the ranks of scholars trained in the traditional methods of philology, archeology, and history. Examples are Daniel and Aline Patte's use of French structuralism in *Structural Exegesis; From Theory to Practice* (1978) and Robert Polzin's use of Russian formalism in *Moses and the Deuteronomist* (1980). The second reaction comes from scholars trained in literary criticism and deliberately invading a territory where even the religion and literature analyists have feared to tread. Examples are Frank Kermode's theoretical and philosophical meditations in *The Genesis of Secrecy* (1979) and Robert Alter's detailed close readings in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981). And to this latter group must now be added Northrop Frye, taking his title from Blake's claim that "The Old and New Testaments are the Great Codé of Art." Frye asks programmatically, "Why does this huge, sprawling, tactless book sit there inscrutably in the middle of our cultural heritage like the 'great Boyg' or sphinx in *Peer Gynt*, frustrating all our efforts to walk around it?"

"The Bible is . . . a pattern of commandments, aphorisms, epigrams, proverbs, parables, riddles, pericopes, parallel couplets, formulaic phrases, folktales, oracles, epiphanies, *Gattungen, Logia*, bits of occasional verse, marginal glosses, legends, snippets from historical documents, laws, letters, sermons, hymns, ecstatic visions, rituals, fables, genealogical lists, and so on almost indefinitely." That is one aspect of

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Religious booknotes

Books of Spiritual Praxis

Mary Gerhart

OUT OF THE CACHE of books sent to me in three months is a potpourri of topics—on Biblical prophets, on the communities of L'Arche, homosexual counseling, family spirituality, family therapy, an anatomy of Cursillo.

Their perennial interest for special groups taken for granted, what claim do these books—what used to be "practical" or "devotional" literature—have on a wider audience? Is there a touch of class to gather them up in a net of general significance?

Let us conceive of this class as a new genre we will call "spiritual praxis." The cash value underlying good books in this genre, like *The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality* is believability. Dolores Leckey dares the implausible—an analysis of family values, relationships, activities in the light of Saint Benedict's *Rule*. The result is a remarkably fresh look at humans in both family and by implication monastic life. For Leckey it is different to be a man or woman in 1982 from what it was in 1972. The genius of Leckey's book lies in the way her examples make good the argument. Narratively sophisticated and tentative, they are above all memorable. Leckey is Executive Director for the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Laity.

The Ordinary Way: A Family Spirituality, by Dolores Leckey, Crossroad, $7.95 paper, 156 pp.

Elie Wiesel's *Five Biblical Portraits* is believable in a quite different way. The charm of Saul, Jonah, Jeremiah, Elijah, and Joshua is in their extraordinariness. Here is Wiesel on Elijah: ". . . his disappearance is as mysterious as his appearance. He responds to our inner need: he is . . . the secret emissary who advises the price to revoke his evil decree, the . . . traveler who arrives at the right moment, at the right place, to prove to a despairing person or . . . community that hope is forever possible and it has an ever-changing face." Jonah the unlucky, Joshua the lucky, Saul the complex, Jeremiah the tearful—all stride through semi-narrative episodes which the masterful story-teller weaves as a historical vignette of prophetic destiny. Wiesel originally gave these five lectures at Boston University and at New York's 92nd Street "Y."

Five Biblical Portraits, by Elie Wiesel, University of Notre Dame Press, $9.95 paper, 157 pp.

In *The Challenge of L'Arche*, Jean Vanier, the founder of L'Arche, introduces seventeen accounts of individuals who have joined or begun

MARY GERHART *teaches hermeneutics, religion, and literature at Hobart and William Smith Colleges. She has published a book and articles in philosophy of religion and literary criticism.*

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the biblical sprawl but the other is just as important: "Literally, the Bible is a gigantic myth, a narrative extending over the whole of time from creation to apocalypse, unified by a body of recurring imagery that 'freezes' into a single metaphor cluster." Frye's own work is not structured by either the Bible's internal generic diversity or its external linear narrativity but is presented as a giant chiasm in which *The Order of Words*, subdivided as Language, Myth, Metaphor, Typology, reverses itself as *The Order of Things*, subdivided as Typology, Metaphor, Myth, Language.

Language opens and closes the book. *Language I* proposes the possibility of a "history of *language*," that is the trans-

Christian houses for the mentally handicapped. Vanier is a charismatic figure who is surprised at the growth

The Challenge of L'Arche, by Jean Vanier, Novalis, $9.95 paper, 286 pp.

of L'Arche, now a world-wide community with fifty-five houses: "I never meant it nor planned it. In some ways I just stumbled upon the world of mentally handicapped people." Each of the other scripts has a similar simplicity and self-effacement. Vanier used to travel, like Paul of Tarsus, regularly to each of the houses to help solve problems, settle disputes. Urgent problems had to await his visit. Vanier has since stepped down as International Coordinator and the community now has a Constitution and regional officers. Vanier links the ministry of L'Arche with liberation in his conclusion.

J.C. Wynn's *Family Therapy in Pastoral Ministry* is the product of seasoned experience. It stops just short of being a professional handbook by the authorial voice which predominates and because of chapter titles like "Games Families Play." "Family Therapists You Should Know," and "Seventeen Often-Asked Questions." Initiates will find a good history of the field and a guide

Family Therapy in Pastoral Ministry, by J.C. Wynn, Harper & Row, $12.50, 184 pp.

through the theories that inform it. Wynn teaches pastoral theology and directs the Program in Family Ministries at Colgate Rochester.

Cursillo: Anatomy of a Movement announces an intriguing strategy: to study a movement in American culture in depth from an anthropological perspective. If we fail to "understand that the exotic is within us, as an inherent part of our culture" we will not be "able to handle the unusualness we perceive in others." Moreover, not to see the exotic within us is to domesticate the alien, "hoping

Cursillo: Anatomy of a Movement, by Marcene Marcoux, Lambeth Press, $14.95, 284 pp.

perhaps to keep this dimension from surfacing." Marcene Marcoux sees the cursillo's survival as a "struggle for understanding, competing with other activities to be considered meaningful and, thus, familiar." She wagers, "The reward of winning is being taken for granted; of losing, being labeled strange." The book describes

Afire with Love: Meditations on Peace and Unity by Brother Roger of Taizé Crossroad, $6.95 paper, 192 pp.

and explains the cursillo lucidly, if eclectically. For example, an appeal to Derrida's "breakup of presence" is made to explain speaking, which plays a key role in the cursillo. Indeed one of the goals of the cursillo is to enable traditional Catholicism to "speak the language of its people." Marcoux's careful book facilitates the fulfillment of that goal.

Afire with Love: Meditations on Peace and Unity by Brother Roger of Taizé brings together three previously published books, *Dynamique du provisoire* (1965), *Violence des pacifiques* (1968) and *Etonnement d'un amour* (1979). This history of publication (the first book just after the Second Vatican Council, the second when student protest in France was at its peak, and the third just recently), is documented by a changing authorial voice as well. *The Dynamics of the Provisional* is written for a presumably adult audience on the possibilities and hopes of the young. *Violent for Peace* alternates reflection on political-religious issues and journal entries which reveal personal struggle with changing structures and values. Contrary to the Table of Contents which indicates a different structure, each of the chapters in *The Wonder of a Love* begins with a brief comment and prayer followed by journal entries. The historical events mirrored in Brother Roger's book grow in immediacy.

Morton T. Kelsey's *Prophetic Ministry: The Psychology and Spirituality of Pastoral Care* continues his work of bridging the gap between psychologies of experience and spiritual direction. Fully informed by Jungian and other social-scientific theories, the special focus of *Prophetic Ministry* is on ministry to the lonely, the homosexual, the violent, and the dying. Cautious and generous on controversial issues, this nineteenth book by Morton T. Kelsey is worth the attention it demands.

Prophetic Ministry: The Psychology and Spirituality of Pastoral Care, by Morton T. Kelsey, Crossroad, $12.95, 210 pp.

Spiritual praxis is uncommon common sense found in the rediscovery of essentials, the quick perception of hidden congruities, the fleeting realization of the unknown in the too-familiar. These books provide an indispensable service by mediating between the best theological intelligence of our day and the best articulations of our human experience.

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latable sense in words that cuts across the variety of tongues *(languages)* employed. This history — in effect, the story of emergent Western consciousness — moves from the "this is that" of hieroglyph and metaphor, through the "this for that" of abstract metonymic language, and into the demotic or descriptive ("just the facts please") mode that dominates modern discourse. (The bias for the latter mode — which places us *outside* events — accounts in part for the difficulty in assimilating biblical meanings.) But if these phases begin successively, for us they remain simultaneous modal options — with poetry lying closest to the creative sources of language. It follows, then, that "it is the primary function of literature, more particularly of poetry, to keep re-creating the first or metaphorical phase of language during the domination of the later phases."

Even though the biblical idiom does not coincide with any single mode of language — and in fact represents a fourth option, the kerygmatic or revelatory mode (the theory of phases breaks down badly here) — still, notes Frye, metaphor "is not an accidental ornament of Biblical language, but one of its controlling modes of thought."

Myth "means, first of all, *mythos*, plot, narrative, or in general the sequential ordering of words." *Myth I* then asks, "Granted that the narratives in the Bible are myths in the sense we have given the word, whether they are histories or fictions, are they histories or fictions?" Frye struggles boldly with that question but emerges slightly limping in the dawn. On the one hand: "if anything historically true is in the Bible, it is there not because it is historically true but for different reasons." On the other: "while reading Biblical myth poetically is a more liberal exercise than reading it as factual history, trying to reduce the Bible entirely to the hypothetical basis of poetry clearly will not do."

Is it possible that the Bible's constant frustration of our attempt to distinguish absolutely between history and theology, letter and metaphor, fact and fiction, teaches us something fundamental about that distinction itself, namely, that where the depth is deep enough or the fight is fierce enough we can never tell where the distinguishing line actually is? This seems likely.

Myth II surveys the individual or internal units which are modeled on the external or overarching construction of "the entire Bible, viewed as a 'divine comedy,' contained within a U-shaped story . . . in which man . . . loses the tree and water of life at the beginning of Genesis and gets them back at the end of Revelation." But, of course, that inaugural question from *Myth I* (fact or fiction?) haunts the corridors of both small and large structures, and the larger the biblical structure the greater the haunting presence becomes.

In *Metaphor I* the problem of distinguishing "literal" and "metaphorical" is solved by conflation: "the primary and literal meaning of the Bible, then, is its centripetal or poetic meaning." In *Metaphor II* five different metaphorical structures are traced throughout the Bible. But the paradisal (trees, water), pastoral (flocks, herds), agricultural (harvest, vintage), urban (Jerusalem, Temple), and human (marriage) metaphorical clusters have both an ideal or apocalyptic aspect and an evil or demonic counterpart. It is this dialectical patterning that supports internally the somewhat external or canonical unity imposed on the disparate biblical materials from a later situation.

Typology is the book's hinge. *Typology I* notes the classic principle that the New Testament was concealed in the Old, while the Old was revealed in the New. This gives an historical dimension to biblical typology, and in *Typology II* Frye proposes "seven main phases: creation, revolution or exodus (Israel in Egypt), law, wisdom, prophecy, gospel, and apocalypse" which follow one another in succession, "each phase being a type of the one following it and an antitype of the one preceding it."

The book's structure is chiastic but with an abcd/dcba rather than an abc/d/cba construction. This entails the book's reversing itself not around some emphasized center but around a black hole, or better, a white page. I finished the book with an acute sense of disappointment, as of something missing that should have been there. Maybe this absence is no more than the promised second volume. I fear, however, that the absence is more profound than that. We

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can study the Bible *as* literature, and it has been done. We can study the Bible *and* literature, and Frye has probably done it here as well as it can be done. But what if the Bible's heart is the combination of religion and history and literature? What happens when religion appears as a frustratingly indistinguishable amalgam of all three phenomena in a book? If that is the triple challenge posed by the Christian Bible to any serious reader and not just to believer alone, then emphasizing only religion, or only history, or only literature, or even any two of those aspects, will not meet the Bible on its own terms as the great code of all three in combination, as the great round-dance of religion, history, and literature.

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Kirkridge Gathering

The Company at Kirkridge, a supportive network for contemporary Christians will meet November 5,6,7, 1982. Join us and become part of an ongoing group which is ecumenical in every dimension. *U.S. Christians and Central America* will be discussed by Fr. Dan Jensen and Sr. Conchita Hojilla from Maryknoll. For further information write Anthony Ciccariello, 520 West Gray St., Elmira, N.Y. 14905.

Before the Rains

An expanding welfare center in Madras has been offered land to relieve growing congestion. To provide storage for its various feeding programs and a small health care wing, the structure must be built before the heavy rains due in October. Checks should be sent to S. J. Kathivakkam Social Welfare Centre, Ennore, Madras 6—057, South India (Airmail 40¢) or, for forwarding, to Salesian Missions, Box 30, New Rochelle, N.Y. 10802.

Correspondence

(Continued from page 450)

achievements of the welfare state.

To bring Mr. Cort's story closer to home, it is worth mentioning that here in Massachusetts there now exists the first American statute (Mass. General Law 157A) which incorporates the unique internal financial and legal structure innovations which are key to Mondragon's success. The By-Laws used in conventional American statutes, not being designed to promote industrial democracy, just will not do the trick.

In addition to the law, actual democratically owned and controlled industrial cooperatives are also coming into being here in the United States. To name just a few, the Workers Owned Sewing Company of Windsor, North Carolina, is succeeding at employing fifty women, primarily black, in one of the poorest counties in the country. In Philadelphia, the United Food and Commercial Workers are planning to re-open three supermarkets recently closed by A&P. And in Burlington, Vermont, forty-five construction workers have organized themselves as a cooperative firm by the name of Moose Creek Restoration.

This summer, the Industrial Cooperative Association will lead a small group of financial and religious leaders (including Monsignor George Higgins) on a tour of Mondragon. We hope to bring home with us more in-depth, practical lessons on how to combine democracy and prosperity in industry.

CHRISTOPHER MACKIN
Industrial Cooperative Association

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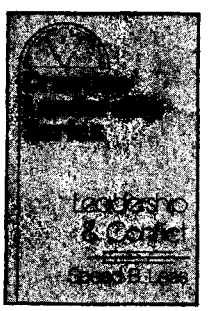

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